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Mrs. John Drew, American Actress-Manager, 1820-1897.

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Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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MRS. JOHN DREW, AMERICAN ACTRESS-MANAGER, 1820-1897

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Speech

by
Dorothy Eldeen Stolp
M.A., Northwestern University, 1948
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ABSTRACT

The nineteenth century in American theatrical history has frequently been ignored or summarily dismissed by theatre historians as being a period of little consequence. The reason assigned is that little significant American drama was written during the period. The century is important, however, because it saw the growth and development of the theatre in this country as an American institution. Many playhouses were built and some interesting innovations in staging took place. Perhaps the most important development was the rise of the American actor and theatre manager. During this period the American theatre ceased to depend upon the theatres of Europe, particularly those of England, to supply it with actors and managers. Some of the people who contributed to the growth and development of the American theatre were native Americans, while some of the others adopted this country as their own and spent the remainder of their lives in its theatre.

Among the latter group was Mrs. John (Louisa Lane) Drew, the subject of this critical biography, who spent more than seventy years in the American theatre and was successful both as an actress and as a theatre manager.

Mrs. Drew was born in England in 1820 and made her

debut as a babe in arms. As a small child she played many children's roles. Shortly after coming to this country, she became a child prodigy and toured the nation as such, playing protean pieces and adult roles beyond her years.

The actress was one of the few child prodigies in theatrical history to gain distinction as an adult performer. She played light comedy roles, sang in operas, and danced in ballets while still in her teens; and as an adult player, she was in demand as a stock company actress because of her versatility. The actress was married three times and as Mrs. Henry Blaine Hunt, Mrs. George Mossop, and Mrs. John Drew played a variety of roles both as a stock company actress and as a starring player.

Mrs. Drew became active in theatrical management in 1861 when she acquired the lease to the Arch Street Theatre in Philadelphia. In a short time her theatre became known as one of the best stock company houses in the nation. Patrons were assured of seeing a production carefully staged, and actors found that it added to their prestige to play at "Mrs. John Drew's Arch Street Theatre." She was a strict disciplinarian, and her theatre was recognized as an excellent training school for young actors.

Mrs. Drew continued her acting career along with her managerial work and appeared nearly every season in her own house. She also acted at benefits in other theatres, and for

twelve years she toured with Joseph Jefferson's famous production of The Rivals. Mrs. Drew was well-known for her roles in high comedy and was the most famous Mrs. Malaprop of her day. She did much to foster interest in the so-called "old comedies" by reviving them frequently in her theatre.

When it was necessary to relinquish the lease on the Arch Street Theatre in 1892 because theatrical syndicates made booking difficult and because a shift of population drew people away from her once famous theatre, the veteran actress took to the road, playing old comedy roles with great success in the leading cities of the country.

In 1897, Mrs. Drew died without ever having retired from the theatre, and the theatrical profession mourned the passing of one of their most remarkable members. Since that time, her accomplishments have been forgotten to a large degree. This may be true because more attention has been given to the work of the men of the nineteenth century by historians and scholars. Then, too, in her acting career Mrs. Drew gained her fame as a comedienne rather than as a tragedienne, and the reputations of the latter seem to be more lasting. Furthermore, much of Mrs. Drew's work was done in Philadelphia rather than in New York, and the last-named city has been recognized as the theatrical center of the nation since early in the nineteenth century. Another reason why Mrs. Drew's work is not so well known today is

doubtless the illustrious careers of her children and grandchildren. She is perhaps best remembered today as the mother of John Drew, the well known light comedian of the first quarter of the twentieth century, and as the grandmother of the famous Barrymore family of the present day.

In view of the fact that Mrs. Drew spent most of her life in the American theatre, this study was undertaken in order to examine her work in the century in which she lived. An examination of the facts concerning her theatrical career indicates that she was an important figure in her own right and that her work contributed materially to the history of the nineteenth century American theatre.

INTRODUCTION

The nineteenth century was an important period in the development of the professional theatre in America, for it was a time of growth and expansion of theatrical activities throughout the nation. Many theatres, already in operation at the beginning of the century, continued to flourish, and many new theatres were built. As the nation expanded to the south and west, entertainers and theatrical managers pushed into the frontier areas to provide the settlers of the newly developed regions with entertainment. Theatres were constructed in these areas also.

The theatrical fare of the century consisted of tragedies, comedies, farces, burlesques, ballets, operas, melodramas, equestrienne pieces, and plays that were forerunners of our modern musical comedies, for the most part, although there were circuses, novelty entertainments, vaudeville acts, and "Wild West" shows also. Amateur groups, resident stock companies, visiting stars, and traveling combinations provided entertainment, and near the end of the century, the theatrical syndicate came into being.

Unfortunately there was a dearth of significant American drama written during this hundred-year period, a fact which has led some scholars and historians to dismiss

the period as one of little consequence in theatrical history.

The century is, however, worthy of consideration for several reasons. In addition to its being a period of growth and expansion of theatrical activities, this century was interesting for evolution in the staging of plays. More important is the fact that it was the one in which American actors, actresses, and theatre managers came into prominence. Some of them achieved considerable fame in their own day, and a few of them, notably Edwin Forrest, Edwin Booth, Charlotte Cushman, L. M. Davenport, John McCullough, and Augustin Daly, among others, are remembered today. Their work continues to be known because they have been mentioned in theatre histories, in accounts of regional theatres, and in memoirs and biographies. Actors, actresses, and theatrical managers of this century have also received some attention from scholars interested in the period, and innumerable masters' theses and several doctoral dissertations have considered their contributions to American theatrical history. These studies, together with the regional theatre studies which have been made, help to give a better understanding of the nineteenth-century theatre in America. This study, which considers the work of a woman who spent more than three quarters of the century upon the stage, seventy years of that time in the American theatres, was undertaken with the hope of adding to the store of knowledge.

Mrs. John Drew, child prodigy, versatile stock actress, leading lady of many of the most famous actors of the day, both English and American, scintillating comedienne in her younger days, and probably the most famous American Mrs. Malaprop in her older years, for thirty-one years the manager of a leading metropolitan theatre, has been chosen as the subject for this study.

Despite Mrs. Drew's long and interesting career in the theatre, her work seems to have been neglected by scholars and biographers, and she is best known today, perhaps, as the progenitor of a distinguished family of American actors, the Drew-Barrymore family. Her long career in the theatre during a period in which the American theatre was developing entitles her to further consideration.

This study has taken the form of a biography, and material for it has been gathered from many sources. Mrs. Drew's Autobiographical Sketch, which is little more than an outline of some of her activities, has been used as a guide, and writings by other members of her family have helped to supply additional information about her life and work. Biographies, reminiscences, memoirs and other writings by members of the theatrical profession have also helped to add to the picture. Newspaper advertisements, play reviews and feature stories about the theatre were also sources of information. Other sources include: court records, vital

statistics, church records, cemetery records, scrapbooks, clipping files, and personal letters.

Histories of the English theatre were also consulted in an attempt to gain information about Mrs. Drew's early years in the theatre.

Limitations necessarily had to be placed upon the scope of this study, for it was not possible to collect data on all of Mrs. Drew's appearances during the seventy years that she was active on the American stage. Some seasons are considered in greater detail than others, either for the reason that they were more important, or because they were representative seasons, or because more information was extant about them. In many instances it was possible or desirable to give only a representative sampling of the receptions accorded the actress during a season. The largest portion of this study centers around Mrs. Drew's acting appearances in some of the leading cities, although her years of theatrical management are considered in some detail.

It is hoped that this study, along with the studies that have already been made and those yet to be made of members of the theatrical profession who were active in the theatre of the nineteenth century, will add a useful chapter to the history of the American theatre.

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS ON THE STAGE (1820-1832)

In the early days of the nineteenth century, most of the actors and actresses who appeared upon the American stage had received their training in England. Some of these players came to America to seek their fortune, only to return to England again upon the completion of a remunerative tour. Not infrequently did they return again and again to add to their store of wealth, but they did little to contribute to the growth of the American theatre. Other actors and actresses came to America to make their homes and to spend the remainder of their playing days upon the stage of this country. They, along with the native-born Americans who became interested in professional careers in the theatre during the century, were the people who were really responsible for the growth and development of the American theatre. Among the English players who came to America to become permanently identified with the American theatre were Mrs. Eliza Lane and her young daughter, Louisa.

The latter, Louisa Lane, after three marriages was

also known to American theatre audiences as Mrs. Henry Blaine Hunt, as Mrs. George Mossop, and as Mrs. John Drew.

According to her own word, she was born in Lambeth Parish, London, January 10, 1820,¹ a little more than two weeks before the death of George III.² The death of the reigning monarch plunged the nation into mourning, and the theatres were closed for a time.³ The parents of the young

¹ Several dates have been cited as the birthdate of Mrs. Drew, but the year 1820 seems to be the one most widely accepted as being true. It is the date which she gives in Autobiographical Sketch of Mrs. John Drew (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1899), p. 5, hereafter cited as Autobiographical Sketch. Also, a letter, headed "Galt House, Louisville, Feb. 23," which is in the Harvard Theatre Collection, states: "I was born on the 10th of January, 1820..." The same date also appears on her tombstone in Mount Vernon Cemetery, Philadelphia.

John Malone, "Mrs. John Drew," Harper's Weekly, XLI, (September 11, 1897), p. 909, gives the date of her birth as 1819.

T. Allston Brown, History of the American Stage, 1733-1870. (New York: Dick and Fitzgerald, n. d.), p. 105, hereafter cited as Brown, History of the American Stage, and

T. Allston Brown, "Mrs. John Drew," Famous American Actors of To-day, edited by Frederick E. McKay and Charles E. L. Wingate, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Co., c. 1896), I, 127, hereafter cited as Brown, "Mrs. John Drew," gives the date of her birth as 1818.

Lionel Barrymore, We Barrymores as told to Cameron Shipp (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951), gives the date as 1818 in the genealogical table which appears on the inside cover of the book, but uses the date 1820 in the text, p. 15.

² George III died January 29, 1820.

³ John Genest, Some Account of the English Stage, from the Restoration in 1660 to 1830 (Bath: H. E. Carrington, 1832), IX, 33, 52, 70, states that the theatres in London and Bath were closed for over a fortnight in mourning for George III.

Louisa were out of work for some weeks, and according to her story, much hardship was endured by the members of the theatrical profession in England at that time.⁴

Louisa's father, Thomas Frederick Lane, was described by his daughter as being "an actor of considerable provincial fame."⁵ His parents, according to a later member of the family, were William Haycraft Lane (1752-1829) and Louisa Rouse (1756-1804), who both acted in and managed theatres in England.⁶ A study of the early strolling players in the English provinces mentions a Mr. and Mrs. Lane as being associated with the playhouse at Coventry. Mr. Lane was made Master of the Playhouse in 1831.⁷ It is not known if these Coventry players were antecedents of the subject of this study.

Louisa Lane's mother was Eliza Trenter or Trentner,⁸ "a very pretty woman and a sweet singer of ballads" when she was married to Thomas Lane.⁹

⁴ Autobiographical Sketch, pp. 5, 6.

⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

⁶ Barrymore, p. 14.

⁷ Sybil Rosenfeld, Strolling Players and Drama in the Provinces 1660-1765, (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1939), pp. 218, 220, 223.

⁸ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 5, gives her names as Trenter, and Barrymore, p. 15, gives it as Trentner. Her name has also appeared in print as Trantner and Trautner.

⁹ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 5.

Doubtless little Louisa spent some of her babyhood backstage sleeping in the traditional bed of stage children, a theatrical trunk. At any rate, she was on hand to make her first appearance on stage at an early age.

At the age of twelve months my mother took me on the stage as a crying baby; but cry I would not, but at the sight of the audience and lights gave free vent to my delight and crowed aloud with joy.¹⁰

This anecdote has been widely used in biographical sketches. Brown, in repeating it, said that her first appearance was at the age of nine months and identified the play as Giovanni in London. In commenting upon the story, the historian wrote: "All she had to do was to cry, at which she was not a success. This, I believe, is the only time in seventy and more years that this lady has failed to fulfill the requirements of the role assigned to her."¹¹

Additional information about Louisa's early career on the stage has to be gained entirely from the actress' reminiscences, for there seems to be no historical account of it. It is not known at what age she began to make regular appearances, but according to her own words:

I acted (?) all the "children's" parts in the plays then usual--Damon's child--and had to be kept quiet

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Brown, "Mrs. John Drew," p. 127.

with cherries before my last entrance, and then Mr. Macready's eyes frightened me into an awed silence.¹²

She must, then, have appeared with William Macready, the great English actor, at an early age.

Louisa also played with the celebrated actor Thomas Potter Cooke. The earliest role which she mentioned by name was that of the brother of Frankenstein, who was killed by the "Monster" of Frankenstein during the course of the play. Cooke was the "Monster." Years later the actress recalled the following impression of that experience:

Mr. Cook's [sic] name . . . recalled a memory long effaced, for suddenly it dawned upon me that I had played the part of the Child whom the Monster kills, and I have now distinct remembrances of my terrible and real fright when Mr. Cook [sic], dressed as a terrible monster in a greenish ghoulisn costume, and looking so frightful and bloodthirsty, used to seize me and kill me. Oh, I was so frightened. It all comes back to me, now, and nothing can ever scare me so dreadfully again as Mr. Cook's [sic] Monster.¹³

At another time she described her feelings about this production in these words:

. . . to this hour [I] can remember the horror which possessed me at his look and attitude, my own form dangling lifeless in his arms. He was a very amiable man, and always had some nice thing to give me after the play.¹⁴

¹² Autobiographical Sketch, pp. 6, 7.

¹³ The Daily Picayune, March 27, 1894.

¹⁴ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 10.

The "nice thing" would seem very small compensation, indeed, for being frightened so badly at each performance.

On several occasions Louisa acted with the popular Miss Maria Foote, who was pleased with her efforts and presented her with a wax doll dressed as Maria Darlington, one of Miss Foote's favorite roles.¹⁵ The English actress probably never guessed that the recipient of her gift would later play the same roles many times upon the American stage.

Louisa played her first important speaking role when she was "six or very nearly seven years old." She was Prince Agib in a production of Timour, the Tartar, which was presented at Cooke's Amphitheatre in Liverpool.¹⁶ The child was doubtless delighted to play in a piece in which horses were the principal performers. Such productions, however, were not without danger to the actors, and the actress later related an incident which might very well have ended her career before it had really begun. According to her story:

I was Prince Agib confined in prison by Timour, because I was the true heir to the throne. My mother comes to the court to beseech for my liberty and gets into more trouble, and is cast into the "lowest dungeon by the moat," I having obtained my liberty in the meanwhile. The last scene shows a practical

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 13.

cataract in the center of the stage with a prison to the right; at a given call I rush on, on horseback, and exclaim, "My mother, I will free you still!" and rush down to the prison, almost under the water, take my mother (personated by a young circus rider) on my horse, clasping me round the waist, and dash up the cataract. This had been done with enthusiastic applause for many nights; but this evening the horse stumbled when on the third table, and rolled down to the other two to the stage. My mother, being a very fine rider, saved me from serious injury, and the curtain fell. There was a universal wish on the part of the audience to know if "the dear little girl was much hurt;" but she was insensible to the kind wishes of her audience, I believe I may truly say for the first and only time in her life.¹⁷

John Kinlock, who later became Louisa's stepfather, her own having died when she was about five years old,¹⁸ directed Timour the Tartar. Kinlock had previously directed Louisa in Oberon, in which she made her first appearance in Liverpool when she was five.¹⁹

Louisa's last appearance on the English stage seems to have been during the season she played Prince Agib, for in the summer of 1827, she and her mother embarked upon the packet-ship "Britannia" for America,²⁰ and as far as this writer has been able to determine, neither of them ever again made an appearance upon the stage of the country in which they were born.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 13, 14, 17.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁹ The Southern Galaxy, March 19, 1929.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 18.

The Lanes were engaged by John Hallam, who acted as an agent for Joe Cowell, who had taken over the proprietorship of the theatre on Walnut Street in Philadelphia that year from Price and Simpson, proprietors of the Park Theatre in New York.²¹ Although the company recruited by Hallam stopped in New York for a few days,²² there seems to be no evidence, as one writer suggests, that they played in that city before going on to Philadelphia.²³

Cowell seems not to have been entirely satisfied with the company brought over by Hallam, for he later

²¹ Joe Cowell, Thirty Years Passed Among the Players in England and America, II, "America," (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1844), p. 80.

²² Charles Durang, "History of the Philadelphia Stage Between the Years 1749 and 1855," written for the Philadelphia Dispatch, collected, arranged in six scrap-books and illustrated by Thompson Westcott, 1868, Vol. III, p. 238, Rare Book Collection, University of Pennsylvania Library.

²³ Barrymore, p. 16, states: "Mum Mum [Louisa Lane Drey] and company played their New York engagement, and then went straight to Philadelphia, where our granddam founded her dynasty and theatre." However, neither the actress herself nor any historians writing about the period mention a New York engagement. The confusion may have resulted from a statement which appears in the Autobiographical Sketch, p. 17, to the effect that the Lanes were engaged by Hallam "an accredited agent of Price and Simpson of the 'Old Park Theatre.'" Although Hallam may also have been an agent of this firm, both when they operated the theatre on Walnut Street and while they operated the Park, he seems to have been working for Cowell in this instance.

remarked that "the only females he Hallam introduced to an American audience, with the exception of his new relations, were Mrs. Lane and her talented little daughter."²⁴ Hallam, it seems, had recruited a company in which his new bride and some of her relatives were members. Durang, however, was of the opinion that Hallam "prudently and ably fulfilled the order given him by Cowell," and said further that Hallam was "especially instructed not to go beyond three guineas salary for any leading performer--so we may presume, to graduate the salaries from \$10, \$12, \$14, and \$15 per week." Durang suggested that "these were close and prudent offers," and that "they were rates of income that talented people would not long submit to receiving, as the result proved."²⁵

When the English company, which had arrived in New York on June 7, 1827,²⁶ reached Philadelphia, they found Cowell's season well under way, the theatre having opened on May 28. Equestrienne pieces, dances, tight-rope walking acts, small farces, and the like made up the programs. John Kinlock, formerly of Astley's Amphitheatre, London, directed the equestrian spectacles.²⁷

²⁴ Cowell, p. 80.

²⁵ Durang, III, 238.

²⁶ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 18.

²⁷ Durang, III, 238.

Soon after their arrival in Philadelphia, some of the new recruits made their debuts, and Mrs. Lane was introduced to a Philadelphia audience on June 26. The advertisement, which appeared in a Philadelphia newspaper on that day read as follows:

Circus

The Last Season of the Equestrian Company performing
in this Establishment.

June 26th Mrs. Lane's First Appearance No Song No
Supper, or the Lawyer in the Sack

To conclude with a Scottish Dramatic Legend, called Meg Murnock; or, a Tale of Terror. The public are respectfully informed that Mr. Hallam has returned from Europe, with the following ladies and gentlemen to be attached to his establishment--Mr. Grierson, Smith, Wells, Sefton, Mitchell; Mrs. Lane, Mrs. Mitchell, Mrs. Hallam, Miss Stanard, Miss Wells.²⁸

No mention was made of Louisa Lane and her name did not appear in advertisements for the remainder of the season, which ended on July 23. Mrs. Lane, however, appeared in a second performance of No Song No Supper on June 28, and on July 16, she sang The Dashing White Sergeant.²⁹ Durang stated that Mrs. Lane was "a very neat and pretty looking actress, and of great utility in the general range of business." He said she "possessed very respectable vocal abilities," and that "she made her debut with very

²⁸ The National Gazette and Literary Register, June 26, 1827.

²⁹ Ibid., June 28-July 23, 1827.

warm approbation." During the next season, according to the same historian, she was "well received in Diana Vernon, in 'Rob Roy,' and in characters of that operatic species was deemed a model representative, as not violating their truth and beauty of conception and modest execution."³⁰

During the time that the theatre was closed, extensive alterations were made in the physical structure of the house. The ring was converted into a spacious pit, and on August 29, the theatre was reopened as the Philadelphia Theatre, Walnut Street. On the opening night, John Bull and White Lies were the plays offered, and a song, Indian Maid, was sung by Mrs. Kinlock, formerly Mrs. Lane.³¹ Apparently Louisa's mother and Kinlock were married sometime during the period that the theatre was closed. Seemingly, however, the romance did not develop on as short an acquaintanceship as the dates would indicate, for Kinlock and Mrs. Lane had known each other in England.³² Kinlock arrived in America only a short time before Mrs. Lane and Louisa. According to Durang, he made

³⁰ Durang, III, 239.

³¹ The National Gazette and Literary Register, August 29, 1827.

³² Strangely enough, although Barrymore speaks of his great grandmother as Mrs. Kinlock, the following statement appears on page 14 of We Barrymores: "One of the Lane girls married John Kinlock and established an acting dynasty in that branch of the family."

his first appearance in Philadelphia on June 4, 1827.³³
 Thus, he did not, as some newspaper accounts of a later date romantically stated, follow Mrs. Lane to America to press his suit.³⁴

Louisa made her American debut during the fall season at the same theatre in which her mother and stepfather were playing. It was in the role of the Duke of York in a production of Richard III, which starred Junius Brutus Booth.³⁵ Brown has recorded the date of her first appearance in Philadelphia as September 26,³⁶ and advertisements in a Philadelphia newspaper for the month of September, 1827, indicate that Booth played in Richard III on both September 6, and September 26.³⁷ No mention was made in the advertisements of the person appearing as the young

³³ Durang, III, 238.

³⁴ The Philadelphia Inquirer and the New York Times, August 12, 1887, were of this opinion. They seem to have been under the impression that Kinlock first appeared in America in The Battle of Waterloo. He appeared in this piece in New York in 1828 and in Philadelphia in 1829. It was probably his most spectacular piece, but it was not his first.

³⁵ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 21. Also, in the letter headed "Galt House, Louisville, Feb. 23," in the Harvard Theatre Collection, Mrs. Drew wrote: "...came of /sic/ this country in June 1827--and appeared at the Walnut St. Theatre, Phil^a as "The Duke of York" to the elder Booth's "Gloster" in "Richard the 3."

³⁶ Brown, History of the American Stage, p. 105, and Brown, "Mrs. John Drew," p. 127.

³⁷ The National Gazette and Literary Register, September 1-30, 1827.

prince, and it may be that Louisa played the role on both occasions.

The season at Cowell's establishment was not successful, and after the theatre closed early in November,³⁸ the company went on to Baltimore.³⁹

During the season in Baltimore, Louisa appeared with Edwin Forrest, who was even then making a reputation for himself as an American actor. She was Albert to his William Tell in Sheridan Knowles' play of the same name. Forrest was so pleased with her performance that he gave her a silver medal. On one side, the date, "February 20, 1828" was inscribed, and on the other, these words: "Presented by E. Forrest to Miss L. Lane as a testimonial of his admiration for her talents."⁴⁰

It is not known how long the child actress stayed in Baltimore, but apparently she enrolled in school there and attended classes for about two months. According to her story, this was the second and last time she attended school in her lifetime. The first school that she attended was in England, where she was enrolled for three months. She was withdrawn from the Baltimore school when

³⁸ Ibid., November 3, 1827.

³⁹ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 21.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

her mother found out that the teacher could not spell her name correctly. When questioned about her formal education, Louisa had this to say:

Where was I educated? Why, bless your heart, I was never educated. I don't believe that I am educated now in the systematic interpretation of the word. My school has all been from human nature and the people I met. I never went to school more than five months in my lifetime, three months in London and two months in Baltimore. I do not remember when and how I learned to read, and as to writing I could never form a respectable looking letter according to the set copy types. Penmanship according to methods was my horror as a child--and as a woman, too, for that matter. The first book I ever remember reading was Shakespeare, when I was but 8 years old, the part of the ghost having a peculiar fascination for my childish fancy. I suppose, really, the truth is that "I just growed," as Topsy would say. I suppose that I went on picking up a little here and a little there until, as dear old Dickens says somewhere, "all my pores took the knowledge in"...Somehow I knew how to spell by instinct, and somehow that faculty has never deserted me.

You see...there are other schools than those of books and methods. There is such a great advantage in listening and picking up and listening. I used to listen to the conversation of all the clever people I met, and make it a point to remember all that I could in this way, and as my experience has been very varied all over the country, I had rare opportunities for observation and improvement in that way.⁴¹

Eight years of age seems rather young to be reading Shakespeare, but doubtless Louisa's reading was inspired by necessity as well as pleasure. She could learn roles with greater facility if she could read them herself and did not have to depend upon her elders to teach them to her by

⁴¹ The Daily Picayune, March 27, 1894.

rote. The child actress was also something of a prodigy and probably learned to read without any great degree of difficulty.

In 1828, Louisa began to make regular appearances upon the stage as a child prodigy, having been groomed by her stepfather to become a second Clara Fisher.⁴² She took over some of the protean pieces made famous by her predecessor,⁴³ and on March 28, 1828,⁴⁴ made her debut in New York as Little Pickle in The Spoiled Child at the Bowery Theatre.

⁴² Autobiographical Sketch, p. 26.

⁴³ Clara Fisher had made a phenomenal success as a prodigy in England some years before. In September, 1827, when about sixteen years old, she made her American debut at the Park Theatre in New York and was well received. She did not reach the heights she had achieved in England when she was younger, but she revived an interest in child prodigies. Clara Fisher was a successful protean player and was admired for her performances in adult roles, also.

⁴⁴ The New York Daily Advertiser and the New York Evening Post, March 28, 1828, both give this as the date of her first New York appearance. No evidence was found in either of these newspapers to support Brown's contention, ("Mrs. John Drew," p. 127,) that her first appearance was on March 3.

Strangely enough, Lewis C. Strang, Players and Plays of the Last Quarter Century, I, (Boston: L. C. Page and Co., 1903), p. 192, states that Louisa Lane appeared in London on March 28, 1828, in The Fatal Marriage with Mrs. Duff and Macready. Genest, IX, pp. 415, 417, reveals that Mrs. Duff, from Dublin, made her first appearance as Isabella at the Drury Lane on March 3, 1828. He states that Macready, Cooper, and Wallack were in the cast, but does not mention the child. He states further that the play was not repeated, and he does not list a play for March 28. It would seem, then, from the evidence at hand, that Strang was in error. He also errs in the same article in his statement that Louisa Lane had played the Duke of York in Richard III in Philadelphia in 1828. That date seems to have been. 1827.

Louisa's second appearance in New York was in a protean piece called Old and Young, or the Four Mowbrays, in which she sustained four characters. Her third appearance, nine days later, was in the same piece.⁴⁵

Less than a week later, she was seen at the South Pearl Street Theatre, Albany, appearing in The Spoiled Child. For her benefit, a few days later, she was Paul in The Wandering Boys. Six-year old Julia Turnbull, who later achieved some fame as a dancer, played Justin in the same play.⁴⁶

Later in the month, Louisa was re-engaged for three nights at the Bowery, and on the first night, again appeared in Old and Young. On her second night, she played Albert to Thomas Hamblin's William Tell, and six characters in The Actress of All Work. Her third night was a benefit night, and on this occasion, she essayed the role of Goldfinch in The Road to Ruin.⁴⁷

Mr. and Mrs. Kinlock were both making appearances in New York theatres at this time, Mrs. Kinlock appearing

⁴⁵ The New York Daily Advertiser, March 31, April 9, 1828.

⁴⁶ H. P. Phelps, Players of a Century, A Record of the Albany Stage Including Notices of Prominent Actors Who Have Appeared in America, (Albany: Joseph McDonough, 1880), p. 116, states that she first appeared on April 14.

⁴⁷ The New York Daily Advertiser, April 29, May 2, 6, 1828.

at the Chatham,⁴⁸ and Kinlock at the Lafayette.⁴⁹

Louisa's first appearance at the Park Theatre, then the leading theatre in the nation, appears to have been on June 3, at which time she acted at a benefit for H. A. Williams. The circumstances concerning her appearance at Williams' benefit are not known. He may have been a particular friend of the family and the appearance may have been a courtesy gesture, or it is possible that Kinlock, who was managing the child actress' career at this time, was looking for an opportunity to present her at the Park and took this occasion to do so. An appearance at the Park, even in a benefit, possibly added some prestige to a player. Then, too, this was the theatre in which Clara Fisher had been appearing and he may have wished to invite comparison. If her appearance was the result of managerial strategy, it seems to have succeeded in accomplishing its purpose, for Louisa was engaged for the short summer season which opened the seventh of July.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ George C. D. Odell, Annals of the New York Stage, III, (New York: Columbia University Press), p. 351, notes that Mrs. Kinlock appeared as Diana Vernon in Rob Roy at this theatre on April 18. She made her debut the night before.

⁴⁹ Ibid., III, 351, Kinlock played Napoleon in The Battle of Waterloo, on May 7 at the Lafayette.

⁵⁰ Ibid., III, 324.

At Williams' benefit, two pieces featured the young player, The Spoiled Child and The Actress of All Work.⁵¹ These were protean sketches which Clara Fisher had made famous.

Before beginning work at the Park, Louisa participated in a benefit for her stepfather at the Lafayette Theatre. A "card" announcing the proposed benefit stated that "Mr. Kinloch⁵² having recovered from his severe indisposition, respectfully announces that his BENEFIT will take place on SATURDAY EVENING next, June 7, on which occasion MISS LOUISA LANE will personate the character of Captain Flash in MISS IN HER TEENS, and THE ACTRESS OF ALL WORK." The "card" also noted that there would be a concert in which Mrs. Kinlock would participate, and that Kinlock would be seen in "his original character of Bonaparte" and in a new melodrama which was to be presented for the first time in this country.⁵³

About a month later, Louisa appeared before New York audiences again, at which time the following advertisement appeared:

⁵¹ The New York Daily Advertiser, June 3, 1828.

⁵² The name was spelled both Kinlock and Kinloch in advertisements and programs. In her Autobiographical Sketch, p. 26 the actor's stepdaughter spelled it Kinlock.

⁵³ The New York Daily Advertiser, June 5, 6, 7, 1828.

MASONIC HALL

MISS LOUISA LANE, of the late Bowery Theatre,⁵⁴ will be AT HOME in this magnificent Hall, on Thursday & Friday 3rd & 4th July at 8 o'clock, when will be presented a grand concert by distinguished vocalists--after which, the popular Comedy called The Actress of All Work, in which MISS LANE will personate six different characters.

Doors open half past 7. Performance commences at 8; The hall will be brilliantly lighted--splendid sofa seats, an elevated stage--private boxes for families. Admittance 50 cents, children half price.⁵⁵

A few days later the Park Theatre reopened for a short summer season, and according to Odell, "old attractions filled the bills until July 12." On that date, William Tell was presented with Barry in the title role, and Louisa Lane as Albert. The evening ended with The Actress of All Work. The Road to Ruin was offered five days later with the child star again appearing as Goldfinch. Odell noted that "little Miss Lane appeared as Goldfinch on the seventeenth on the same stage that had exhibited Clara Fisher's Goldfinch a few months earlier."⁵⁶ Her third appearance was at the benefit of an actor named Muzzy, at which time she again played the four Mowbrays in the farce, The Old and Young.⁵⁷ Other appearances during

⁵⁴ Odell, III, 342, states that the Bowery Theatre was destroyed by fire May 26.

⁵⁵ The New York Daily Advertiser, July 2, 3, 4, 1828.

⁵⁶ Odell, III, 325, and New York Daily Advertiser, July 17, 1828.

⁵⁷ The New York Daily Advertiser, July 25, 1828.

the season were: Dr. Pangloss in The Heir at Law,⁵⁸ and the six characters in The Actress of All Work.⁵⁹

Louisa took her benefit on the next to the last night of the season, and the program on that evening must have been somewhat like a vaudeville show. The child actress appeared in the second act of William Tell, the fifth act of The Heir at Law, a scene from The Tragedy of King John, in which she played the role of Prince Arthur, and in a protean piece said to have been written for her, called Twelve Precisely, or A Night at Dover.⁶⁰ Other members of the company contributed a burlesque of Bombastes Furiosos, and songs and dances.⁶¹

The record of Louisa's appearances after the New York engagement is not complete. It is possible that she joined Madame Celeste⁶² for the tour of New York state

⁵⁸ Ibid., July 26, 1828.

⁵⁹ Ibid., July 29, 1828.

⁶⁰ According to Durang, III, 258, the characters in this piece were: Amelia Wildlove (11 years old), Katty [sic] O'Carroll (2 years old), Marchioness de Grenouille (31 years old), Captain Wildlove (24 years old), and the Marquis de Grenouille (5 years old).

⁶¹ The New York Daily Advertiser, August 1, 1828.

⁶² Celine Celeste (1814-1882) was the first French actress and dancer to appear in New York. She and her sister, Constance, danced at the Park Theatre during the summer season when Louisa Lane appeared at that theatre. Celeste appeared in many cities and did much toward popularizing ballet dancing.

which she described later in her Autobiographical Sketch. Louisa, her parents, Madame Celeste, Celeste's sister, Constance, and the dancer's husband, Henry Elliott, apparently made up the company. The following anecdote was related in connection with this engagement.

All the towns, now splendid cities with magnificent opera-houses, were then guiltless of any decent halls, and the orchestras were the great difficulties. In Buffalo, a pretty village, the only available music was one violin played by an old dorky, and all he knew was "Hail, Columbia" and "Yankee Doodle;" so, as Celeste danced twice, the orchestra (!) commenced the first time with "Hail, Columbia" and finished with "Yankee Doodle," and for the second dance reversed the order of precedence. Poor Celeste, who spoke very little English then, her patience exhausted exclaimed, "D--- 'Yankee Doodle' and 'Hail Columbia.'"⁶³

Some time during the year 1828, Louisa appeared in Providence,⁶⁴ and during the same year, she acted the role of Uncamunca to Major Steven's Tom Thumb in an extravaganza at the Tremont Theatre in Boston.⁶⁵

In January, 1829, Louisa and her parents returned to Philadelphia, this time to the Chestnut Street Theatre. The child made her first appearance in this house on January 5, in Twelve Precisely. Durang said that the five different

⁶³ Autobiographical Sketch, pp. 30, 33.

⁶⁴ Charles Blake, An Historical Account of the Providence Stage (Providence: 1868), p. 179.

⁶⁵ William W. Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage (Boston: James Munroe and Co., 1853), p. 265.

characters in this piece were "all admirably delineated, with all the point, art, and nature with which the most artistic actor or actress of the day could have invested them." On the same evening she acted *Little Pickle* "with much original cleverness."⁶⁶ A Philadelphia newspaper made these comments on her performance:

MISS LANE.--This astonishing little creature appeared at the Chestnut Street Theatre last evening. She is not more than ten years of age, and evinces a talent for and a knowledge of the stage beyond what we find in many experienced performers of merit. The entertainment of Twelve Precisely is well adapted to the display of the versatility of her powers; and in the Irish Girl she may with truth be pronounced inimitably comic. Her brogue and manner are excellent. The Young Soldier was also admirably assumed; his crotchical airs were natural, evinced astonishing observation in a child so young, and literally convulsed the house with laughter. Her performance of Little Pickle also possessed great merit, and the applause bestowed upon her throughout the evening bespoke the wonder and delight of the audience. Those who have a taste for the wonderful should not miss the present opportunity of gratifying it. We promise ourselves a treat of no ordinary kind when she appears as Goldfinch in the Road to Ruin.⁶⁷

Several days later Philadelphians had an opportunity to witness her characterization of Dr. Pangloss, and Durang reported that it was "truly very droll and amusing for a child of seven or eight years of age, which it was said she was." However, he added that one of the newspapers

⁶⁶ Durang, III, 258.

⁶⁷ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 155.

remarked: "Some say she is nine years old, some say twelve."⁶⁸ Apparently, then, there was some speculation about her age at the time she was playing as a child star. If her birth-date was 1820, she must have been almost nine years old. Later, when referring to this production, the actress said: "think of that great old actor /the elder Joseph Jefferson, grandfather of the Joseph Jefferson of Bob Acres and Rip Van Winkle fame/ playing with a child of nine years old!"⁶⁹ Jefferson played Zekiel Homespun in this play.

Durang was of the opinion that her The Actress of All Work was "the ne plus ultra of her unique infant efforts."⁷⁰ Brown made the following comments on her appearances in the two plays:

....she acted Dr. Pangloss; and the impersonation was pronounced by the critics "the best since the days of Twaits," yet, at the same time he never produced half the effect, nor was his humor by any means as rich as was our heroine!s.

In the "Actress of all Work," in which she played the same night, the actress went through six characters distinguishing and marking each with a precision that would have done credit to many of the "stars" that occasionally twinkle on our stage.⁷¹

An old play bill dated January 9, 1829, lists the

⁶⁸ Durang, III, 258.

⁶⁹ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 30.

⁷⁰ Durang, III, 258.

⁷¹ Brown, "Mrs. John Drew," p. 128.

cast of Old and Young, or The Four Mowbrays, as it was frequently billed. The arrangement of the cast list is typical of the programs for protean pieces:

Old Wilton, a Bachelor of Sixty----Mr. Hathwell
 Charles Mowbray, Wilton's Nephew---Mr. McDougal
 Peter, Wilton's Gardener-----Mr. Heyl
 William-----Mr. Lee
 Peggy-----Miss Hathwell
 Matilda Mowbray-----Miss Lane!
 Master Hector Mowbray-----Miss Lane!!
 Master Gobbleton Mowbray-----Miss Lane!!!
 Master Foppington Mowbray-----Miss Lane!!!!⁷²

On January 22, Louisa appeared at a benefit for the widow and eight children of Tryal Deaves, who was accidentally shot by the wadding from a musket in an accident which occurred during the performance of The Battle of Waterloo, a military spectacle produced under the direction of Kinlock. An advertisement stated that she was to appear in Twelve Precisely,⁷³ and Durang reported that she also played Edward in Everyone Has His Fault.⁷⁴

A Walnut Street Theatre advertisement, which appeared on January 30, announced "the last appearance of Miss Lane before her departure for New Orleans." She again played in Twelve Precisely. However, Louisa did not depart for the South immediately, unless her mother did not accompany

⁷² Autobiographical Sketch, p. 159.

⁷³ The National Gazette and Literary Register, January 22, 1829.

⁷⁴ Durang, III, p. 258.

her, for Mrs. Kinlock's name appeared in advertisements for the Walnut Street Theatre through March 3.⁷⁵

On her way down the Mississippi to New Orleans, probably by river packet, Louisa stopped off at Natchez for an engagement. A newspaper, in a review of her first performance, referred to her as "MISS LANE, the Clara Fisher of the South." She presented her characterization of Dr. Pangloss, and was, according to one reviewer, received with a hearty welcome:

For ourselves, we were never more astonished. This character, though marked with pointed peculiarity, was admirably hit, and sustained throughout with an ability that would have been highly creditable to the mature age of either sex. Miss L. is but ten years of age! We have never witnessed such precocity of talent. She not only played her own part successfully, but with astonishing presence of mind, occasionally assisted some of the unfortunate dramatic personae, who have, for a long time, been cursed with bad memories.

In the afterpiece, "The Actress of all Work," Miss L. personated SIX CHARACTERS!! in each of which, she preserved the identity, with astonishing accuracy. The "London Actress," and the "Literary Fop," were admirably done. She was greeted throughout with repeated applause, and the curtain went down with acclamation.⁷⁶

The same article indicated that the child star would play Little Pickle on the following night, and the reviewer went on to say: "If the public wish to see the

⁷⁵ The National Gazette and Literary Register, January 30-March 3, 1829.

⁷⁶ The Southern Galaxy, March 12, 1829.

little wonder of the day, they had better take a peep at the brick house, at the 'east end of town'"....⁷⁷

Louisa appeared in three pieces, The Four Mowbrays, Miss In Her Teens, and Twelve Precisely on March 18, and two days later she played Goldfinch and Sophia in Rendez-vous. The last-named role may have been a new one for her, for there has been no mention of it in her repertoire up to this time. For her benefit night, Louisa was seen in the first two acts of Richard III and The Spoiled Child.⁷⁸

The Southern Galaxy devoted many lines to the young player during her Natchez engagement. On one occasion a biographical sketch appeared. The material was said to have been taken from a Philadelphia newspaper in anticipation of many enquiries regarding her birth and parentage. The article opened with these lines from Othello:

Take her for all in all,

Eye shall not look on her like again.

After the biographical information, the writer went on to say:

Miss Lane is now playing in this city. She has excited the most unqualified admiration. Upon the stage, her attitudes and walk are graceful, her pronunciation is correct; her reading and action discover a just conception of the character; her voice is not powerful, but her enunciation is clear and distinct and her

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., March 19, 1828.

points are made with judgment and force. In a word, she is a prodigy. In person, Miss Lane is of the ordinary size of her age.--Her form is symmetry itself. Her face is lovely and strongly indicative, at once, of an extraordinary intellect, and exalted virtues.⁷⁹

Perhaps the writer felt that he needed to qualify his words of praise, somewhat, for he said:

We are the worshiper at the shrine of intellectual worth; and being so, we are sometimes led into error by enthusiasm; but if, in the present case, any one entertain a suspicion of exaggeration, we would merely refer them to the stage to judge for themselves.⁸⁰

The same issue of The Southern Galaxy also contained a poem written in praise of the young star. The author is identified only by the signature "Augusta." In commenting about the poem, the reviewer previously quoted has the following to say:

We could wish, with the fair poetess whose happy effusion we insert below, that so bright a star might revolve in a different sphere; that the path of this little wanderer, might lead to a more substantial fame; but as her course is destined, we can only wish for her, what she must one day unavoidably obtain, the richest laurel of the Drama.⁸¹

The poem, which is inscribed to the young Louisa, is quoted in its entirety:

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

From the Bower of Taste.
TO MISS LANE--THE INFANT 'Roscia.'

Bright Cherub! I could even weep that thou,
So sweet a scion from fair Nature's tree,
Shouldst dim the sunny radiance of that brow,
The lustre of thy spirit's purity;
School the free pulse that heaves thy guileless heart,
And strive to mimic all but what thou art!

The upturn'd glance of thy cerulean eye,
In thrilling language, speaks an ardent soul!
The flash of genius--passion's energy--
And virtue's dawn--all these to the control
Of Art must yield--Child! thou must learn to sigh.
E'en when thou'rt blest--smile, amid misery!

This is thy fate--but yet so young art thou--
So pure and beauteous! one might wish for thee,
A happier destiny!--Would thy fair brow,
From art and all her dark disguises free,
Might ne'er be wreath'd but by those fadeless flowers,
Which learning twines in virtue's sacred bowers!

Augusta⁸²

Later in the month, the New Orleans theatre-going public was "respectfully informed" in an American Theatre advertisement that "the infant prodigy, MISS LOUISA LANE" was engaged for six nights. Her first appearance was in The Actress of All Work,⁸³ which was the afterpiece for a program which featured Junius Brutus Booth,⁸⁴ J. H. Caldwell,

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ The Louisiana Advertiser, March 28, 1829.

⁸⁴ Junius Brutus Booth (1796-1852) as a young man had a striking similarity in appearance and manner to Edmund Kean, who was then at the height of his career. Booth came to America in 1821 and became known for his fine acting of such roles as Richard III, Shylock, Sir Giles Overreach, and Pescara, and for his eccentric behavior both on and off the stage. He was the father of J. B. Booth, Jr., John Wilkes Booth, and Edwin Booth, all actors.

and Mrs. Sloman in Romeo and Juliet. Her second appearance in New Orleans was in Twelve Precisely, or A Day at Dover,⁸⁵ which also served as an afterpiece for a Shakespearian production, this time Julius Caesar with Booth and Thomas Abthorpe Cooper.⁸⁶ She appeared in both the feature play and the afterpiece on her third night, The Heir at Law and The Four Nowbrays.⁸⁷ For two nights, the little actress appeared in favorite pieces, The Actress of All Work, on one night, and The Spoiled Child, on another on a program featuring a moving diorama containing 12,000 square feet of canvas. This scenic device, used in a production of Paris and London, was advertised as an attraction "eclipsing everything in the scenic way ever exhibited in this city."⁸⁸ Louisa's sixth night was a benefit and both Booth and Miss Jane Placide "generously offered their services." They were seen in Therese, or the Orphan of Geneva. Then, in what must have been a rather curious presentation, Louisa played Richard and Booth Richmond in the fourth and

⁸⁵ The Louisiana Advertiser, March 30, 1829.

⁸⁶ Thomas Abthorpe Cooper (1776-1849) came to America in 1796 and became a popular favorite in both tragedy and genteel comedy. For about eight years he managed the Park Theatre. He left the stage in 1838 and became an officer in the New York Custom House.

⁸⁷ The Louisiana Courier, March 31, 1829.

⁸⁸ Ibid., April 2, 3, 1829.

fifth acts of Shakespeare's tragedy of Richard III. To complete the evening, Louisa impersonated five characters in Twelve Precisely.⁸⁹

The young actress received favorable notices in at least one newspaper in the city during this engagement. One reviewer stated that although he was not in favor of bringing girls of her age upon the stage "when they should be in a seminary cultivating their minds and inculcating fixed principles of virtue and religion," he was nevertheless "constrained to say that she is the most astonishing child, and far exceeds all the Infant Prodigies we have hitherto seen."⁹⁰ On the day of her benefit, the same newspaper printed the following item:

--By the bills and advertisements of the day it will be seen Miss Lane's benefit takes place tonight, accompanied with an inviting bill of fare. We are persuaded that an interesting child of such transcendant genius will never appeal in vain to the enlightened and liberal audience of New-Orleans. It is surely hoped that the little Star will shed its light on a multitude of shining Faces tonight.⁹¹

In June, Louisa and her family made several appearances in St. Louis, the first on June 2 at J. Purdy Brown's amphitheatre. An equestrian program was advertised for the evening, as well as The Heir at Law and The

⁸⁹ Ibid., April 7, 1829.

⁹⁰ Ibid., April 2, 1829.

⁹¹ The Louisiana Courier, April 2, 1829.

Actress of All Work. Mrs. Kinlock sang "two favorite songs" and Kinlock played "the manager" in the farce. Seemingly, Louisa scored a success in St. Louis, also, for a local rimester wrote a poem in her honor and she was given a second engagement, this time at the theatre rather than the amphitheatre. However, this appearance seems to have been delayed by a temporary indisposition. Apparently she made two appearances during this engagement and was seen in her usual protean pieces.⁹²

July found the young actress and her family in Cincinnati for a three-nights' engagement. On the first night, Louisa appeared in The Heir at Law supported by her mother and stepfather.⁹³ A second appearance brought her on the stage in Twelve Precisely, The Four Mowbrays, and The Rendezvous. In the last-named piece, she sang The Dashing White Sergeant.⁹⁴ Her benefit and last appearance was in the role of Richard III in the play of the same name, in which she played the fourth and fifth acts. She also was seen in Turn Out apparently for the first time, and concluded the program with Twelve Precisely.⁹⁵

⁹² William G. B. Carson, The Theatre on the Frontier. The Early Years of the St. Louis Stage (Chicago: The University Press, 1932), pp. 107, 108, 109.

⁹³ The Daily Gazette, July 8, 1829.

⁹⁴ Ibid., July 10, 1829.

⁹⁵ Ibid., July 13, 1829.

Louisa's appearances in this city also brought forth comments from the press. One writer, who signed his pieces "S" seemed to have a great deal of admiration for the young lady and urged everyone to attend the "performances of this interesting child." He thought that in so doing the public could "judge the correctness of the praise so liberally bestowed upon her by all who have seen her." "S" furnished the editor of the newspaper with the copy of a story that had appeared in the Natchez newspapers, and begged him to insert it, which the editor obligingly did.⁹⁶ Later this same writer requested that she play Richard III while she was in the city,⁹⁷ which she did do on her last night.

Another writer, who signed his item "N" did not share the first writer's enthusiasm. He referred to Louisa somewhat contemptuously as the "'young prodigy' or as we have seen her called, by some critical wiseacre, 'the infant Roscia,'" and had the following to say of her efforts:

As for the interesting little creature, Miss Lane, it is superlatively ridiculous, to see her strutting over the stage in the character of Dr. Pangloss, or squeaking in that of Richard: if she must be sent out in these characters at all, let it be by herself, and not to keep up the delusion of the play. The world had a surfeit of this kind of nonsense in the days of Master Betty, and it was then so completely scouted, that it was presumed the attempt would never be made again. After all, it is mere charletanerie. If this,

⁹⁶ Ibid., July 10, 1829.

⁹⁷ Ibid., July 11, 1829.

no doubt talented child, is to be deprived of the proper kind of education, and to be forced night after night before the public, her guardians ought to select those pieces alone, where her performances may have some little appearance, if not of reality, at least of propriety. The "Spoiled Child" and the "Actress of All Work" do very well; and many other pieces might be selected, in which an entire want of fitness does not exist.⁹⁸

One would feel inclined to agree with the critical comments of the Gazette writer, but seemingly the general public did not share his opinion, and the enthusiasm for child performers continued for some years. Indeed, Louisa continued to play these roles for at least another year, and she was followed by other so-called "child prodigies."

Seemingly Louisa appeared in Louisville in 1829 and 1830. In 1829, the program was billed as a dramatic and musical program and Louisa was referred to as "the celebrated juvenile," and the following year she was called the "brilliant and beautiful child of genius."⁹⁹

In the autumn Louisa and her parents returned to Philadelphia, and the young actress made her first appearance at the Arch Street Theatre in that city, the theatre with which she was to become so prominently identified in later years, on September 22, 1829. She appeared in Twelve

⁹⁸ Ibid., July 15, 1829.

⁹⁹ Jane Elinor Jones, "A History of the Stage in Louisville, Kentucky, From Its Beginnings to 1855." Unpublished M. A. thesis, State University of Iowa, 1932, pp. 60, 61.

Precisely, on a lengthy program that included a melodrama, The Anaconda, or, the Serpent of Ceylon, Katherine and Petruchio, and Othello. Edwin Forrest was in the cast of the last-named play.¹⁰⁰

Until the latter part of 1830, Louisa continued to play as a star "with varying success (financially)," and in addition to the roles previously mentioned, she played seven characters in Winning a Husband, five characters in 72 Piccadilly, and Thomas in The Secret.¹⁰¹ She also made an appearance in Timour the Tartar, which her father directed at the Chatham Theatre in New York in November, 1830.¹⁰² Her role is not known, but it is possible that she again played Prince Agib. The production, however, featured a horse named Romeo.

Ludlow, in his account of the theatre in the South and West, wrote that Louisa came west in 1830 or 1831 and appeared with him in a comic opera called Of Age To-morrow. According to Ludlow, she played Maria, a chambermaid (ingenue), and he played Baron Willinghurst.¹⁰³ It has not

¹⁰⁰ The National Gazette and Literary Register, September 22, 1829.

¹⁰¹ Autobiographical Sketch, pp. 29, 30.

¹⁰² Odell, III, 527.

¹⁰³ Noah Miller Ludlow, Dramatic Life As I Found It, A Record of Personal Experience With an Account of the Rise and Progress of the Drama in the West and South, with Anecdotes and Biographical Sketches of the Principal Actors and Actresses Who Have at Times Appeared Upon the Stage in the Mississippi Valley (St. Louis: G. I. Jones and Co., 1880), p. 674.

been possible to check the date of this performance, but it seems possible that Ludlow might have been mistaken, for the role does not seem to fit in the repertoire of roles in which she appeared in 1830, and she was not in the country during the following year. It is more likely that the performance to which he refers took place in 1832 or 1833 when the actress was more mature and had taken over chambermaid roles.

Shortly after the New York appearance, the Kinlocks and Louisa left for the West Indies. Kinlock and a man named Jones from New York formed a partnership and recruited a company to operate a theatre in Kingston, Jamaica. The vessel on which the company was traveling struck a rock off the coast of San Domingo, and the passengers spent six weeks on the beach in dwellings made from the ship's cargo, shingles and staves. It was there that Louisa spent her eleventh birthday. Eventually the group was able to proceed by brig to the City of San Domingo, whence they traveled overland to Kingston.

Louisa recalled later that the company was quite successful there, but misfortune in the form of yellow fever struck the family and Kinlock and his youngest child, a baby of ten months, succumbed to the disease. Mrs. Kinlock contracted the disease, too, but fortunately recovered. Following the doctor's advice, she and the remainder of the family, which by this time included Georgiana and Adine

Kinlock, half-sisters of Louisa, and the little actress herself, moved to Falmouth in the northern part of the island. Louisa did not remember whether they acted in this city or not, but said that she supposed they did. Rumors of an insurrection made Mrs. Kinlock decide to return to America, and in 1832, she and Louisa resumed their careers on the stage of this country.¹⁰⁴ However, Louisa was at that time twelve years old and was no longer a child prodigy. She was ready to begin the next page of her long and varied career in the theatre.

¹⁰⁴Autobiographical Sketch, pp. 33-42.

CHAPTER II

"CHAMBERMAID,"¹ SINGER AND DANCER (1832-1838)

When Mrs. Kinlock returned to America, she seemingly did not have an engagement for herself and her daughter, and she must have felt some anxiety as she went about seeking one. Not only had she been away from the American theatre for two years, but her daughter had reached an "in-between" age which would make casting difficult. Then, too, Mrs. Kinlock was now the sole support of the two children of her second marriage, Georgiana² and Adine Kinlock.³ The date of the Lane-Kinlock family's

¹ "Chambermaid" roles were light comedy roles which we would call ingenue parts today.

² Georgiana Kinlock (later Mrs. Robert Stephens) was, according to the records of Mount Vernon Cemetery, Philadelphia, born November 25, 1828 and died January 23, 1864. This younger half-sister of Louisa Lane Drew also went on the stage as a child, appearing first in dancing roles and later in supporting parts. She played many times with Mrs. Drew, and at her death, her daughter, Adine Stephens (also known as Adine Drew) made her home with Mrs. Drew and was introduced to the stage by her. Adine Stephens was born March 12, 1860 and died January 19, 1888. She played light comedy roles and was singing in opera a short time before her death. This is doubtless the "Kinlock dynasty" to which Barrymore referred on page 15 of We Barrymores. However, the "so-called dynasty was founded by his own grandmother and not by one of the Lane girls marrying John Kinlock as he states.

³ No records of Adine Kinlock's birth and death were found. Mrs. Drew refers to her on page 58 of the Autobiographical Sketch, and her name appeared in several theatrical advertisements which will be considered later in this study. She appeared as a dancer when she was a child, and apparently she died while very young. Adine Stephens (Drew) appears to have been her namesake.

return to this country is not known, but apparently Mrs. Kinlock wrote the following letter of application soon after they arrived:

August 26, 1832⁴

To Messrs. Forrest & Duffy,--

Gentlemen: Myself and daughter arrived on Sunday last from the West Indies, after a voyage of twenty-two days. I presume it is needless to mention Mr. Kinlock's death, as you have doubtless heard of it long before now. Me and Louisa are at liberty to make an engagement with you. Should there be a vacancy I should be most happy to treat with you--that of first singing or singing chamber-maids--indeed, a general round of business.

As to Louisa, you are aware of what she can do. Your answer by return will oblige your obedient and humble servant.

Eliza Kinlock

Please to direct to 194 Hudson street.⁵

Apparently there was no vacancy, for Mrs. Kinlock and Louisa went to the rival Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, which was under the management of Maywood, Pratt, and Rowbotham, Louisa making her first appearance

⁴ It would seem that an error was made in the month cited in the date of this letter when the letter was reprinted in the Philadelphia Evening Telegraph, August 31, 1897. Louisa appeared in June, 1832 at the Walnut in Philadelphia, and it would seem that the letter of application for a position in a Philadelphia theatre must have preceded this engagement.

⁵ Philadelphia Evening Telegraph, August 31, 1897.

on June 8 as Albina Mandeville in The Will. For good measure, she was also seen in a popular protean piece, The Actress of All Work.⁶ A few days later she was seen in Winning a Husband, in which she played seven characters.⁷ Theatregoers must have continued to show interest in pieces that exhibited her versatility as a performer. On July 25, she appeared at her mother's benefit, playing Juliette in The Dumb Girl of Genoa. Her mother was seen in Cherry and the Fair Star on the same program.⁸ Durang made the following comment in regard to her appearance at this time:

Miss Louisa Lane acted an engagement this season /1831-32/ of juvenile creations composed for her infant talents; and she also appeared in adult characters of the regular drama, which her remarkably imitative ability hit off with a matured tact and judgment, which really seemed to transform the precocious artist into the full grown practiced delineator.⁹

During the season Louisa, her mother, and her half-sisters lived at a boardinghouse in Philadelphia. There Louisa met Alexina Fisher, a member of the Arch Street Company, who was a year younger than she. This meeting

⁶ The National Gazette, June 8, 1832.

⁷ Ibid., June 12, 1832.

⁸ Ibid., July 26, 1832.

⁹ Durang, III, p. 72.

was the beginning of a life-long friendship.¹⁰ The two girls played at theatre when they were not on the stage. According to an anecdote related by the older girl, they acted in the empty attic room where they would "stab each other with great fury and fall upon the ground until the expostulation from the boarders in the third story caused our reconciliation with tears and embraces."¹¹

After the Philadelphia engagement, Mrs. Kinlock went to Baltimore, and Louisa went on to Washington. In her Autobiographical Sketch, she tells an interesting incident in connection with a previous visit to Washington, the date of which is unknown:

(During a former engagement in the last-named city, I was on a visit to Mrs. Eaton's little girl and Mrs. Eaton took me to the President's levee--General Jackson then filling the chair of state. She introduced me to him. He was very kind and sweet to me, kissed me, and said I was "a very pretty little girl." Need I say that I was a Jackson Democrat from that hour,

¹⁰ Alexina Fisher, according to the records of the Mount Vernon Cemetery Company, Philadelphia, was born November 9, 1821 and died March 27, 1887. She came of a theatrical family, being related to the Drake family and Clara Fisher. Her father, Palmer Fisher, died while she was quite young. Her mother, Mrs. E. N. Thayer, delighted theatregoers for many years. Miss Fisher married John Lewis Baker, actor and theatre manager. Together they managed theatres in San Francisco and New Orleans. Their daughter, Josephine, married John Drew, Louisa Lane Drew's son; thus the two families became related through marriage.

¹¹ Autobiographical Sketch, pp. 41, 42.

and have remained one up to date?)¹²

On January 2, 1833, a Washington newspaper advertisement heralded the petite actress' appearance:

The manager of the theatre has the pleasure of announcing the engagement of Miss Lane who will make her first appearance this evening, Wednesday, January 2, when will be presented the celebrated piece of The Will, or A School for Daughters, and the favorite piece of Therese, or, The Orphan of Geneva.¹³

The following night, Snow Storm, or Louisa of Tobolskow was presented by the regular company which included Miss Jefferson, of the famous acting family and T. D. "Jim Crow" Rice. On this occasion, Louisa personated eight characters in Winning a Husband, or Seven's the Main.¹⁴

On the third night of the engagement, William Tell was presented with a player named Ingersoll in the role of the Swiss hero. Louisa was seen in her old role of Albert. No Song No Supper was the second play of the evening.¹⁵

Forty Thieves was the offering for January 5, with Ingersoll, Palmer, Rice, Mrs. Joseph Jefferson, and Louisa

¹² Ibid., pp. 45, 46.

¹³ The Globe, January 2, 1833.

¹⁴ Ibid., January 3, 1833. The farce in which Louisa appeared was advertised as "Blinding a Husband, or Seven's the Main," and it was indicated that she would personate eight characters. Doubtless this was the same farce as Winning a Husband. Perhaps she took on one more character on this occasion.

¹⁵ Ibid., January 4, 1833.



Lane in the cast. Mrs. Jefferson, mother of Joseph Jefferson of later Rip Van Winkle and Bob Acres fame, was Morgiana and Louisa was Zelah. The Broken Sword rounded out the evening's entertainment.¹⁶

During this engagement, Louisa had an opportunity to play on the same bill as the famous Fanny Kemble and her father, Charles Kemble.¹⁷ On January 14, Miss Kemble and her father appeared in Kotzebue's then popular play, The Stranger. Louisa appeared in the afterpiece, The Master's Rival.¹⁸

Seemingly the young actress was greatly impressed with the work of the Kembles, for she wrote later:

Of course, it may be said that I was too young to judge, but I shall never forget either of them. Mr. Kemble was the only Sir Thomas Clifford I have ever seen, and he gave to the character a dignity and pathos without parallel. As Julia Fanny was really great, as she was in Bianca.¹⁹

Louisa had appeared in the protean piece, Winning a Husband on the same bill with the Kembles in The Hunchback, so she

¹⁶ Ibid., January 5, 1833.

¹⁷ Frances Anne (Fanny) Kemble (1809-1893), niece of the celebrated tragedienne, Mrs. Sarah Siddons, and John Philip Kemble, went on the stage to save her father, Charles Kemble from bankruptcy. She was an immediate success and played at the Covent Garden for more than three years before coming to the United States in September, 1832. Here she was received with great acclaim. Her marriage to Pierce Butler in 1834 was not a success and was dissolved in 1845. She retired from the stage when she married, but in 1847 commenced her famous reading tours. She was also an author and poet.

¹⁸ The Globe, January 14, 1833.

¹⁹ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 46.

had had an opportunity to observe their performances as Clifford and Julia.²⁰

A few days after the Kembles left Washington, Louisa joined the company for a presentation of Gustavas Vasa, said to be the first Washington presentation of that piece. The cast included:

Gustavas Vasa.	Palmer
Marcoff.	Eberle
Princess Gamilda	Miss Hathwell
Frederica.	Mrs. J. Jefferson
Eliza	Miss Chapman
Ulrica	Miss Lane

Between the play and the farce, Winning a Husband, Rice was advertised to appear and sing "his celebrated extravaganza called Jim Crow."²¹ During one of Rice's appearances in role of the singing, dancing, Negro comedy character, Joseph Jefferson, the third, made an early stage appearance. He was three or four years old at the time and was concealed in a huge bag and carried on stage by Rice. During the act he was released from the bag and revealed himself as Jim Crow in miniature.²²

Louisa appeared as Lavinia in The Spectre Bridegroom a few days later on a program with Romeo and Juliet which

²⁰ The Globe, January 18, 1833.

²¹ Ibid., January 21, 1833.

²² Joseph Jefferson, Autobiography (New York: The Century Co., c. 1890), p. 67. In an interview given to the Daily Picayune, March 27, 1894, Mrs. Drew mentioned this incident.

featured Augustus Adams and Mrs. Willis.²³ Still later in the month she was Calantha in Damon and Pythias, and Juliette in The Dumb Girl of Genoa, both on the same bill.²⁴

According to the actress, she stayed in Washington until the end of the season then "drifted to Richmond, Virginia, under the management of a Mr. Phillips, known to the profession as 'Nosey' Phillips." According to a later report, the company "did finely with such stars as Booth, Hamblin, Cooper, and Miss Vincent." After a production of Hamlet in which Cooper appeared as Hamlet and George Barrett as Laertes, the stars of the company departed and the manager "sped away to New York to secure talent and never returned." The remainder of the company, which included Edmond S. Conner, Thomas Hadaway, Mr. Isherwood, Mrs. Kinlock, and Louisa, were left to their own devices. Apparently they continued to play for a time, but interest seemed to lag after the stars departed, and this little group of players decided to depart for the West Indies. In the middle of a stormy night, their ship was wrecked on a sandbar in Egg Harbor, West Indies, the second such experience for Louisa and her family. Fortunately all were rescued, and the players returned to New York in a "wood boat," that is, a vessel without any bulwarks, loaded with wood for building.²⁵ Apparently the players decided not to

²³ The Globe, January 24, 1833.

²⁴ Ibid., January 29, 1833.

²⁵ Autobiographical Sketch, pp. 46, 49.

try their fortunes in the West Indies after all.

Shortly after their arrival in New York, Mrs. Kinlock and her daughter began an engagement at the American or Bowery Theatre under the management of Thomas Hamblin, who had been one of the stars of the Richmond theatre during their engagement in the southern city. Louisa was, according to her own word, "a very unhappy age (thirteen), not a child and certainly not a woman," so the chances were against her acting anything of importance.²⁶ However, she seems to have done very well with the small roles in which she was cast. The variety of roles doubtless helped her to develop the versatility which later made her a valuable stock company actress.

The Bowery season opened on April 15, and for a time the manager alternated legitimate drama with operatic performances staged by an Italian opera company. Louisa's first appearance was on April 19, when she appeared in the role of Clara in a production of Fazio, in which Hamblin played the title role and Mrs. McClure the role of Bianca.²⁷

Southey's fantastic poem, Thalaba, the Destroyer was adapted for stage presentation and was presented on May 13. The production was an impressive one with splendid scenery, machinery, costumes and music. Mrs. Kinlock and Louisa were

²⁶ Ibid., p. 62.

²⁷ Odell, III, 638.

cast as spirits and demons, Louisa's name being Marmion and Mrs. Kinlock's, Zeinah.²⁸ Later Mrs. Kinlock must have received a better part, for she was listed in the role of Kvala, which had been Mrs. McClure's role earlier in the season.²⁹ Thalaba was a very popular piece and held the boards alone through May 28. After that time it was put on bills with such plays as Winkie the Witch, The Wonder, The Plains of the Chippewa, Damon and Pythias, Red River, and The Lady of the Lake.³⁰ Thalaba was Hamblin's first great success in a season that Odell described as "troubled."³¹

The company at the Park was of interest because of three young players who were members of it, Mrs. Hunt, William Wheatley,³² and J. W. Wallack, Jr.³³ Doubtless in

²⁸ The Evening Post, May 15, 1833.

²⁹ Ibid., June 17, 1833.

³⁰ Ibid., May 13-June 17, 1833.

³¹ Odell, III, 638.

³² William Wheatley (1816-1876), actor and theatre manager, came of an acting family. His father, Frederick, was an Irish comedian and his mother was Mrs. Sarah Wheatley, well known in New York for her comic old women. One sister Emma was a dramatic actress and another, Julia, a singer. Wheatley was a capable actor, particularly in comedy. He managed the Arch Street, Chestnut Street, and Continental Theatres in Philadelphia and Niblo's Garden in New York. In the last-named, he produced The Black Crook, which had a phenomenal success.

³³ James W. Wallack, Jr. (1818-1873) was the son of Henry John Wallack, nephew of J. W. Wallack, and cousin of Lester Wallack. He was a successful star for some years and for a time toured with his wife (Ann Duff Sefton Wallack) and E. L. Davenport.

later engagements together the three found it interesting to talk about the variety of plays performed this season.³⁴

Hamblin's great success of the season was his production of Mazeppa. According to Odell, "Hamblin . . . was carried by the steed of Mazeppa far over troublous land and water of debt and distress, and arrived, like the hero, into a kingdom that knows no worry."³⁵ Louisa Lane, who was not in the original cast of the piece, described the success more prosaically, but perhaps more realistically:

Then Mr. Gale and his horses arrived from England. "Mazeppa" was prepared, Mr. Farren, the stage manager, said, at an expense of exactly \$100, and they made thousands from it.³⁶

Even though Louisa apparently did not play in the cast of this equestrian piece during the early part of its run, she was not idle, for she appeared in many of the after-pieces which were presented with it. These were repetitions of pieces seen earlier in the season.³⁷

³⁴ The Evening Post, June and July, 1833 advertisements, for example, indicate that Mrs. Hunt played the following-named roles: Norah (The Poor Soldier), Page (The Tragedy of Bertram), Florinda (The Bravo, or the Black Gondola), Josephine (Hofer, the "Tell of the Tyrol"), Scipio (Black Beard, or The Crew of the Revenge), Emily, (Look Before You Leap), Cecilia (first two acts of Paul Jones), Orel (Teddy, the Tiler), Hemmjjnah (The Three Hunchbacks), Lavinia (The Spectre Bridegroom), and Lucy (The Young Widow). Wallack and Wheatley appeared in some of the same pieces.

³⁵ Odell, III, 641.

³⁶ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 62.

³⁷ The Evening Post, July 25-August 15, 1833.

On August 15, the young player joined the cast of Mazeppa, taking over the role of Zemila relinquished by Mrs. Conway, who had become ill.³⁸ Later Louisa said of this opportunity:

I got a little chamber-maid's part, with a front scene with Mr. Gates, the popular comedian, and sang a little song called "Nice Young Maiden" for forty-eight successive nights, and was very happy for my song was always encored.³⁹

Among the afterpieces in which Louisa played after she joined the Mazeppa cast were: My Aunt, in which she played Emma, and Gretna Green in which she was Emily, and The Wife in which she acted the role of Florabel.⁴⁰ Much later the actress remembered that the last-named character was a young person who entered "with a soliloquy of about fifty lines in Sheridan Knowles's most inflated style, which they 'cut out' bodily the second night of the play." She said that this was another check to her proud ambition.⁴¹

There seems to have been no summer recess at the Boverly, and Mazeppa was continued until well into October. It is not known how long Mrs. Kinlock and her daughter remained with the company, but if Louisa's song was encored for "forty-eight consecutive nights," they must have been

³⁸ Ibid., August 15, 1833.

³⁹ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 65.

⁴⁰ The Evening Post, August 19, 26, September 6, 1833.

⁴¹ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 62.

with the company until some time in October. Cast names for Mazeppa were omitted in The Evening Post after August 31. Mrs. Kinlock's name appeared in a cast list in a newspaper advertisement dated September 5, at which time she appeared in the role of Countess Wultum in Reputation.⁴² When names appeared in cast lists in advertisements during the season, the names of Louisa and her mother were frequently listed. It would seem, then, that the manager of the New York theatre thought they had some drawing power. Nevertheless, Mrs. Kinlock seemingly received a better offer for the services of herself and her daughter and they went to Boston:

Mother, being ambitious for me, accepted an engagement at "The Warren Theatre," Boston, managed by Mr. Pelby, the well-known actor and manager, where we jointly received a salary of \$16 per week. I don't know how we lived; but mother was a splendid manager at that time, a marvelously industrious woman, and we all lived at "Ma" Lenthe's, at the corner of Bowdoin Square, a gable-end. We had a large room on the second story, a trundle bed which went under the other for the accommodation of little children, a large closet in which we kept a barrel of ale and all our dresses, and we passed a very happy two seasons in the enjoyment of that large salary, which was eked out by the three clear half-benefits very nicely.⁴³

During her first season with Pelby's company, Louisa continued to appear in afterpieces, and in minor roles in major productions. A check of some of the newspapers of the period gives a representative sampling of the roles. On March 19, 1834, she appeared in the role of Emily in Family Jars, a

⁴² The Evening Post, September 5, 1833.

⁴³ Autobiographical Sketch, pp. 65, 66.

popular farce which shared a bill with The Rivals.⁴⁴ She played Ernestine, the somnambulist in The Somnambulist, or the Village Phantom, for her benefit on May 21. Apparently her benefit was not well attended, for on May 30 a second benefit for the young lady was announced:

Miss Lane's Benefit

Miss Lane respectfully announces that in consequence of the inclemency of the weather on the evening appointed for her benefit last week, the manager has kindly set aside another night for that purpose. This evening, May 30th will be performed, 1st time, the Drama called

Lo Zingaro

Or--the Bohemian's Revenge

New farce

The Wrong Box

nautical drama

Songs of Neptune

Or--the Potomac in Port ⁴⁵

In June, the Warren presented a "new drama in three acts with scenes of Fun, Frolick, Fancy, and Flash, the characters drawn and colored after Nature" entitled The Rake's Progress. The advertisement listed the following scenes and characters:

Act First: Time, Oct. 1820.

Tom Rakewell, (a Sketch in Water Colors)-- Mr F.S. Hill
 Frederick Florid, (a Musical Sketch highly ornamented)
 his first appearance in this theatre--Mr. Walton
 Harry Markahm, (graved in Brass, and highly polished)--
 Mr. J. S. Jones
 Sam Slap, (an Equestrian Painting, with a great breadth
 of coloring)--Mr. J. M. Brown.

⁴⁴The Boston News, March 19, 1834.

⁴⁵Ibid., May 21, 30, 1834.

Ned Noes, (a Fancy Portrait)--Mr. A. Fenno
 Snikes, (a Tailor in many colors)--Mr. Frithey
 Jerk'em, (a Lawyer, in his proper colors)--Mr. Maynard
 Frank--Mr. Eberle
 Fanny Moreland, (a Miniature, highly finished)--Miss
 Pelby
 Betty Higgins, (a Sketch from Nature)--Mrs. Asbury
 Lady Blazon, (a Portrait of a Lady warmly colored)--
 Miss Lane
 Fishmonger (in oil) Fish (in water) Baker (in do)
 Peasants (in green) etc.

Act 2: Time, May, 1821

Tom, (more highly colored)--Mr. F. S. Hill
 Florid, (with more ornament, but worse frame)--Walton
 Harry, (the Plate a little worn)--Mr. J. S. Jones
 Sam, (not "Portrait of a Gentleman")--Mr. J. M. Brown
 Ned, (Painting of Fear, with a Felony in the back-
 ground)--Mr. A. Fenno
 Snump, (his accompanying picture)--Mr. Houpt.
 Lady Blazon, (Portrait of a Coquette)--Miss Lane
 Fanny, (Beauty in Tears, a Sketch)--Miss Pelby
 Betty, (a simple Sketch in coarser colors)--Mrs. Asbury
 Mrs. Dabbleditch, (an antique in a gold frame)--Mrs.
 Kinlock
 Peggy, (her maid)--Miss Kerr

Act 3: Time, November, 1825

Tom ("Look at that picture and on this")--Mr. F. S. Hill
 Florid, (an Italian Painting)--Walton
 Harry, (a Picture of Profligacy)--Mr. J. S. Jones
 Ned, (a sorry picture)--Mr. A. Fenno
 Sam, (a Vagabond picture)--Mr. J. M. Brown
 Snump, (still a following picture)--Mr. Houpt
 Lady Blazon, (a painting out of Order)--Miss Lane
 Mrs. Dabbleditch--Mrs. Kinlock
 Fanny, (a picture of Innocence)--Miss Pelby
 Betty, (a Head of Charity)--Mrs. Asbury
 Martha, (a Rough Sketch)--Mrs. Houpt

In the course of the Drama, Mr. Walton will sing
 the favorite Songs of
 "Let the Toast be dear Woman" and "The Mellow Horn."
 Favorite pas Seul--Miss Kerr

No Song No Supper

Robin--Walton
 With the Songs of "Sea Rover," and "Our Ship's in Port."⁴⁶

⁴⁶ The Boston Evening Transcript, June 9, 1834.

No reviews were found of this strange production, so its reception is not known. It could hardly be considered good drama, but it may have been of interest pictorially.

Some time during the summer, some of the company went to Portland, Maine, and there Louisa acted Julia in The Hunchback and "won considerable local fame."⁴⁷ Also, during the season she played Millwood in The London Merchant. She said that people wished to see her in the role because she was "too young to make ill thinking possible."⁴⁸

Mrs. Kinlock and her daughter returned to the Warren for a second season, and during the summer, they went to Halifax, Nova Scotia, to play with the Garrison amateurs twice a week. According to the actress, they "saw a good deal of human nature there--all the petty strife of real actors without their ability."⁴⁹

In the autumn of 1835, mother and daughter accepted an engagement which was in sharp contrast to their summer's activities in Nova Scotia. Their change of fortune came about when they were engaged by James H. Caldwell, business man, theatre manager, and actor in his own right, to become members of the company which was to

⁴⁷ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 69.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

open the new St. Charles Street Theatre in New Orleans. The company included such players as Clara Fisher Maeder, Ben DeBar, George Holland, and Charlotte Cushman, and the theatre was the finest theatrical structure in the country.⁵⁰

The St. Charles was not completed until November, and Mrs. Kinlock and Louisa found it necessary to earn a livelihood until the time they were to depart for New Orleans. Again they went to Boston, this time to a theatre managed by Thomas Barry, an old friend of the family. Madame Celeste, the dancer, was the star of the company when they joined it, and Louisa, then fifteen, played "several young mothers of rightful heirs" in her pieces. Seemingly the young actress enjoyed these roles for later she wrote:

Oh, what delight it was then to drag a little child after me during three long acts, to have him wrenched from my arms, torn away in despite of my unearthly shrieks to summon my faithful page (Celeste), who undertook to find him and punish the "wretches who had

⁵⁰ The New-Orleans Bee, November 29, 1836, in describing further improvements which had been made for the second season, stated that Caldwell had "built and endowed his theatre in a style of unsurpassed splendor. It ranks, in size, the third in the world, and as in comfort, elegance and beauty, it may truly be said, it is without a rival. John S. Kendall's recent book The Golden Age of the New Orleans Theatre (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), pp. 111-121 discusses the building and opening of this theatre in some detail.

stolen him," and always succeeded after many hair-breadth escapes in the "imminent deadly breach."⁵¹

The trip to New Orleans was made on the Star, a ship which carried some of the other members of the St. Charles Company also. Among the passengers were Mr. and Mrs. James Gaspard Maeder (Clara Fisher), their infant daughter, and Miss Charlotte Cushman, a young singer, a pupil of Mr. Maeder.⁵²

A St. Charles Street Theatre advertisement in a New Orleans newspaper announced that the theatre would open November 30, and included a list of the actors and actresses engaged.⁵³ In addition to those already mentioned, it is interesting to note that Joe Cowell, who was manager of the theatre in which Louisa and her mother made their debuts, was in the acting company, as was his wife. Other company members included J. H. Barton, Ben DeBar, Clementine DeBar, George Holland, and Mrs. N. M. Bannister.

⁵¹ Autobiographical Sketch, pp. 72, 73.

⁵² Charlotte Cushman (1816-1876) was the first great tragedienne of the American theatre. She began her career on the stage as an opera singer, but her voice failed during the 1835-36 season in New Orleans, and Caldwell encouraged her to undertake dramatic roles. She was received with greater acclaim as an actress than as a singer and went on to become famous in such roles as Lady Macbeth, Meg Merrilies, Nancy Sykes, and Queen Katherine. She played such male roles as Romeo, Hamlet, Shylock, and Cardinal Wolsey with some degree of success. Late in life she gave readings from plays.

⁵³ The New-Orleans Bee, November 30, 1835. The advertisement listed the surnames of these and other players.

The advertisement also listed the instruments and players in the twenty-eight piece orchestra and gave the program in detail. At a quarter before seven o'clock, the prize address delivered by Mr. Forbes was scheduled, to be followed by the Overture to Massaniello by the orchestra. The School for Scandal was the main play of the evening with the following important characters:

Sir Peter Teazle.....	Mr. DeCamp
Charles Surface.....	Mr. Barton
Joseph Surface.....	Mr. Forbes
Crabtree.....	Mr. Cowell
Sir Benjamin Backbite.....	Mr. DeBar
Lady Teazle.....	Mrs. Maeder
Mrs. Candour.....	Mrs. Bannister
Maria.....	Miss Lane
Lady Sneerwell.....	Mrs. Kinlock

Between the play and the farce, The Spoiled Child, which featured Miss DeBar as Little Pickle, the orchestra played the Overture to Der Freyschutz.⁵⁴

Kendall reported that the opening night was a complete fiasco, inasmuch as Russell, the manager of the rival Camp Street Theatre, caused a report to be circulated that the new theatre was unsafe because it had been so hastily erected. The audience was small on the opening night, according to Kendall, and the players, who had not played together before, had difficulty acting together.

⁵⁴ Ibid. Kendall, p. 117, states that a program has been preserved of this first performance.

He also said that the auditorium was so large that the actors had difficulty adjusting their voices to it. It is Kendall's contention that Caldwell preferred to forget that he had opened the theatre on November 30. Seemingly, Caldwell claimed in later years that the opening was on December 1, the following night.⁵⁵ On that occasion Mozart's opera, The Marriage of Figaro was the feature attraction, and the house was crowded with fashionable people. There is no record that Louisa played in either the opera or in the farce, The Unfinished Gentleman which completed the bill.⁵⁶

Many years after the opening of the St. Charles, the Maria of the cast of The School for Scandal recalled that occasion when giving an interview to a New Orleans reporter. Her version of the opening differs from that given by Kendall:

'Why, I played at the old St. Charles Theatre the first night it was ever thrown open,' said Mrs. John Drew, yesterday--that delightful, wonderful old lady--'played there the first night it was opened,' she repeated in a thoughtful reminiscential tone....

⁵⁵ Kendall, p. 120. Kendall, pp. 14-64, 111-85 discusses at some length Caldwell's early theatrical ventures in New Orleans and the events leading up to the building of the St. Charles.

⁵⁶ Several times during the interview, Mrs. Drew referred to the opening date as 1839. Apparently she did not remember the exact date, and it may be that the audience seemed larger to her in retrospect than it actually was.

'Oh, yes. New Orleans and I are old friends, and I have such pleasing recollections of that night way back in 1839⁵⁷ when the old St. Charles Theatre was packed on its first night from pit to dome, with one of the finest audiences of those good old days of stationary stock companies. Mr. James H. Caldwell, whom the old residents of New Orleans will remember, was the lessee and manager and I played the part of Maria in the "School for Scandal." Our company made a great hit and the opening of that theatre really marked an epoch in the history of New Orleans. We had a fine company and presented alternately the "School for Scandal" and the "Spoiled Child," the celebrated actress Clara Fisher Maeder playing Lady Teazle!'⁵⁷

In her Autobiographical Sketch, the actress recalled that Mrs. Maeder's reception as Lady Teazle was memorable. She said also that Miss DeBar "made quite a hit" as Little Pickle, and added also that Mr. Caldwell had wanted her to play the role, but that she "begged off."⁵⁸

Since Louisa was a regular member of the stock company, it is highly probable that she appeared in many more roles during the season than existing records indicate. The newspaper advertisements usually listed only the most important characters in a play, and unless a playbill or program has been preserved which gives the entire list of characters, the record of the minor roles has been lost.

On December 4, she played Zamora in The Honeymoon in a cast which included Barton, DeCamp, DeBar, Williams,

⁵⁷ The Daily Picayune, March 27, 1894.

⁵⁸ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 77.

Latham, Cowell, Mrs. Maeder, Mrs. Cowell, and her mother, Mrs. Kinlock.⁵⁹

When Madame Celeste played at the St. Charles, Louisa was named in several of her casts and probably played small roles in other pieces in which the dancer starred. Louisa was Lady Blanche in The Moorish Page,⁶⁰ and Sunbeam in The Devil's Daughter.⁶¹

The Bold Dragoons, which served as an afterpiece to a production of Romeo and Juliet featuring James A. Murdoch,⁶² J. H. Barton, and Miss Lydia Phillips, furnished her with the role of Rosine.⁶³

⁵⁹ Lucile Gafford, "A History of the St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans, 1835-43." Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1930, p. 103. Gafford lists all the plays presented at this theatre.

⁶⁰ According to Gafford, p. 106, this was first presented on January 3, 1836, and was repeated the following day. It was also presented February 12 and 13.

⁶¹ Ibid. stated that it was presented January 6, 7, 8, 9, 1836.

⁶² James A. Murdoch (1811-1893), actor, lecturer, and writer on elocution had just completed an engagement as a juvenile playing with Fanny Kemble before he took the southern engagement because of his health. In 1842, he retired temporarily from the stage to give a series of lectures on "The Uses and Abuses of the Stage." He also gave lessons on elocution. His most important period as an actor was from 1845-1860, when he enjoyed a national reputation as a tragedian and comedian.

⁶³ Gafford, p. 107.

In a production of The Jealous Wife in which Miss Phillips starred as Mrs. Oakley, and Miss Cushman played Lady Free love, Louisa was Harriet.⁶⁴

Her Lady Grace in The Provoked Husband, presented on January 23, was not too well received. The reviewer for one newspaper called it a "miserable failure" and said that Louisa seemed to have "very little idea of character in the *dramatis personae*, and gave Lady Grace the airs of a coquette."⁶⁵

Louisa played in several pieces with George H. "Yankee" Hill. In Jonathan in England she was Fauny [*sic*] to his Solomon,⁶⁶ and in The Knight of the Golden Fleece, she played the role of Constantia.⁶⁷

During the season Louisa was seen in at least one protean piece, A Day in Paris, in which she sustained four characters.⁶⁸ It seems to have been a popular afterpiece.

The Loan of a Lover was produced several times and Louisa had the role of Ernestine, Mrs. Maeder playing Gertrude, a role which the young actress played at a later date, and Mr. Latham played Peter Spyk.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 108.

⁶⁵ The New-Orleans Bee, January 25, 1836.

⁶⁶ Ibid., January 27, 1836.

⁶⁷ Ibid., January 28, 1836.

⁶⁸ Ibid., February 19, 20, March 16, 1836.

⁶⁹ Ibid., February 22, 23, 27, March 7, 26, 1836.

When Thomas Abthorpe Cooper⁷⁰ paid a visit to the St. Charles as a star, Louisa appeared in several plays in which he was featured. In The Gamester, in which he played Beverly and Miss Phillips played Mrs. Beverly, Louisa was Charlotte.⁷¹ Macbeth, with original music, featured Cooper and Miss Phillips in the leading roles, and Louisa played a boy's role, that of Malcolm. A review of the play discussed the interpretation of the roles at some length and had the following to say of Louisa's efforts:

...and we were much pleased with the Malcolm of Miss Lane, altho we do not like to see ladies thus unnecessarily turn themselves into men; however, as "it is a long lane that has no turn," Miss Lane may yet turn to a man!⁷²

Not only did Louisa have to suffer puns made upon her maiden name by drama critics attempting to be clever, she was forced later to bear the ones made upon her married name of "Drew" as well, as we shall see.

⁷⁰ Thomas Abthorpe Cooper (1776-1849) came to Philadelphia from London in 1796 to try his fortune in the theatre of this country. He became a popular favorite in both tragedy and genteel comedy. For about eight years he was one of the managers of the Park Theatre in New York. He retired from the stage in 1838 and became a New York Custom House officer.

⁷¹ Gafford, p. 111, and The New-Orleans Bee, February 27, 1836.

⁷² The New-Orleans Bee, February 29, 1836.

Another Shakespearean play, this time a comedy, Much Ado About Nothing, featured Cooper and his daughter in the roles of Beatrice and Benedick. Louisa played the role of Hero in this production.⁷³

The theatre critic, who used Louisa's name in the pun quoted earlier, may have been prophetic, or may have known that the young actress was romantically interested in one of the men of the company, Henry Blaine Hunt, a tenor, who appeared in many of the musical offerings. Some time during the month of March, the young actress, then sixteen, was married to Hunt, who was, according to the lady, "a very good singer, a nice actor, and a very handsome man of forty." The exact date of the marriage is not known since many New Orleans records are missing for the year 1836.⁷⁴ The marriage must have occurred sometime between March 22 when the young actress' name appeared in a cast list of The Blind Beggars of Bethnel Green as Miss Lane,⁷⁵ and April 21, when she was listed as Mrs. Hunt in a cast list of Is He Jealous?⁷⁶

⁷³ Gafford, p. 112.

⁷⁴ The marriage records for Orleans Parish for this year are missing. A check of records of churches in existence at that time fails to give this information. The records of Trinity Episcopal Church were lost during the Civil War. It is possible that she was married in this church, because later in life she was a member of the Episcopal Church, and she may have been at this early date.

⁷⁵ The New-Orleans Bee, March 22, 1836.

⁷⁶ Gafford, p. 116.

Theatre historians apparently know very little about Hunt, for little has been written about him. Montrose Moses wrote that:

He won notice as Francis Osbaldistone in Pocock's "Rob Roy," and as "Harry Bertram" in a dramatization of "Guy Mannering." His dash, his spirit, his attractive presence had in early years gained him a much coveted place among the fast set which George IV had assembled around the throne.⁷⁷

Moses did not document this information, and it has been impossible to check his data.

Henry D. Stone told an interesting story of the young actress' early association with Hunt, a story which is romantic but certainly not true:

Mrs. John Drew, the enterprising manageress of the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, was a protege of Harry Hunt, and by him brought out at the old Park as a "prodigy," under the name of "Louisa Lane," when grown up, she became Mrs. Hunt.⁷⁸

There is no evidence to support Stone's statement for, as has been stated earlier, she made her first appearance in America with Junius Brutus Booth, and her career as a child prodigy was directed by her stepfather, John Kinlock.

A writer for a New Orleans newspaper gave a description of Hunt which doubtless explains why the older actor was

⁷⁷ Montrose J. Moses, Famous Actor Families in America, (New York: T. Y. Crowell and Co., c. 1906), p. 173.

⁷⁸ Henry D. Stone, Personal Recollections of the Drama, (Albany: Charles Van Benthuysen and Sons, 1873), p. 14.

attractive to the young lady. The writer thought little of Hunt's talent as a singer, but thought that as an actor he was "invariably correct, consistent, and spirited."

He said further:

Mr. Hunt is decidedly the best dressed actor on the St. Charles boards. His costume is always selected with care, always appropriate, and always worn with ease and grace. His style of dressing is indeed finished, and might be adopted by some of the members of the corps who are too apt to forget that appropriate apparel is essential to perfect dramatic illusion. The Charles 2d of Mr. Hunt, is a perfect specimen of his taste. He dresses and represents the merry monarch with a fidelity in strict accordance with our historical knowledge of the character, and his entire impersonation of this part is perhaps unequalled in America. Altogether we consider Mr. Hunt as a performer, an important acquisition to the St. Charles Street Theatre.⁷⁹

However, during the previous season another newspaper writer felt that Hunt's pretensions exceeded his merits.⁸⁰ An item headed "communicated" in the same newspaper criticized Hunt's singing in Cinderella:

...a viler parody of the music of Cinderella we have never witnessed. To particularize, Mr. Hunt is totally unfit for the part of the Prince; indeed his voice is too destitute of the sterling qualities of a singer to be at all adapted to grand opera. His taste is perhaps medium, but it is so little associated with power and flexibility as to render every effort at brilliancy of style, or variety of cadence miserably abortive. Mr. Hodges, defective as he is,

⁷⁹ The Louisiana Courier, March 13, 1837.

⁸⁰ The New-Orleans Bee, January 25, 1836.

his melody is far preferable to Mr. Hunt; the former at least possesses a full clear tone with considerable compass, the latter is devoid of both.⁸¹

These comments would seem to indicate that Hunt was not a top-ranking performer when Louisa Lane married him, and the fact that her career continued to grow and his did not doubtless contributed to the fact that they were divorced a few years later.

Mrs. Hunt was very busy during the remainder of the season, her name appearing frequently in newspaper advertisements. On April 26, for example, she performed in two plays, The Jewess and Simpson and Co. In the former, which was repeated two days later, she played the role of Esther. In the latter, she took the part of Mrs. Fitzallen.⁸²

At Mr. Hunt's benefit, April 30, Mrs. Hunt appeared as Julian in The Peasant Boy, or the Wood and Olives, along with Hunt, DeCamp, Latham, and Miss Cushman. The second piece was Rob Roy Macgregor.⁸³

Mrs. Hunt returned to her childhood role of Albert in a production of William Tell. Pearson of the regular

⁸¹ Ibid., April 19, 1836.

⁸² Nellie Smither, "A History of the English Theatre at New Orleans, 1806-1842," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1942, reprinted from The Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXVIII, (January, 1945), p. 262.

⁸³ The New Orleans Commercial Bulletin, April 30, 1836.

company played the title role.⁸⁴

At a benefit performance for Kendall, the clarinet player, The Tempest was presented with principal characters taken by Barton, Hunt, DeCamp, Latham, Finn, Miss Nelson, Miss Cushman, Miss DeBar, and Mrs. Hunt.⁸⁵ Mrs. Hunt's role in this production is not known. The Loan of a Lover, a piece in which Mrs. Hunt had appeared earlier in the season, was the second play of the evening.

Apparently Mrs. Hunt was well liked in boys' roles, for The Peasant Boy was repeated on May 13. On the same evening Mrs. Maeder appeared as Paul, the pet in The Pet of the Petticoats.⁸⁶ Thus, in one evening the St. Charles patrons had an opportunity to see two favorite actresses in boys' roles. It would seem that the newspaper critics' efforts to discourage women from appearing in men's roles had little effect in New Orleans this season.⁸⁷

A "new patriotic play" The Martyr Patriots, or Louisiana in 1769 was announced for May 16. The two leading roles, Lapranriere and Adelaide, were played by Pearson and

⁸⁴ Ibid., May 5, 1836.

⁸⁵ The New-Orleans Bee, May 12, 1836.

⁸⁶ Ibid., May 13, 1836.

⁸⁷ Ibid., May 21, 1836. Mrs. Hunt's name was listed in an advertisement for Miss DeBar's benefit. She was to play Julian to Miss DeBar's Paul in a piece called The Wandering Boys. It may have been the same play.

Mrs. Hunt. "A Grand Dioramic Vision, foretelling the independence of Louisiana, and the rise and prosperity of the City of New Orleans" was a part of the attraction. The program concluded with The Happiest Day of My Life.

The New-Orleans Bee an English newspaper, and L'Abeille its French counterpart both carried an item about this play in their news columns. The former was as follows:

The drama entitled The Martyr Patriots by T. W. Collins, Esq. is to be represented this evening at the St. Charles Theatre. The subject is taken from the colonial history of Louisiana; the incidents are numerous and well developed; and the tout ensemble is likely to please. A generous encouragement now, may lead to happier efforts hereafter. We believe that Gayerre and Collins are the only native Louisianians who have ever written a book or pamphlet.⁸⁸

The announcement to the French-speaking people, who, according to Kendall, did not ordinarily frequent the English-speaking theatres, was as follows:⁸⁹

Nous avons déjà eu l'occasion de parler de cette tragédie que l'on doit considérer comme une oeuvre vraiment Louisianaise. Cette pièce dont l'action remonte à l'époque de la colonisation, est faite pour intéresser tous ceux qui ont du sang créole dans leurs veines. Convaincue de cette vérité, c'est avec le plus vif plaisir que nous sommes à même d'annoncer à nos concitoyens que c'est aujourd'hui que doit avoir lieu, au théâtre de la rue St. Charles, la première représentation de cet ouvrage. Ne devons nous pas espérer que l'auditoire sera des plus nombreux.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Ibid., May 16, 1836.

⁸⁹ Kendall, p. 120.

⁹⁰ L'Abeille, May 16, 1836.

On May 17, the same play was repeated as was the dioramic view. The second play on this evening was Forty Thieves.⁹¹

A letter to the editor of one newspaper deplored the garbled text of The Martyr Patriots. One does not know whether this was the fault of the actors.⁹²

The last night of the regular season was May 28, on which occasion George Holland, the treasurer, was given a benefit. Holland, himself, appeared in twelve different roles during the course of the evening. The program included three pieces, The Whims of a Comedian, The Secret, and A Day After the Fair. Mrs. Hunt was Cecile in the second play.⁹³

On May 29 and 30, benefits were given for members of the Italian opera company. Then a short summer session began opening with Laugh When You Can and Raising the Wind on June 1.⁹⁴ During this summer engagement, which lasted until July 4, Mrs. Hunt played a variety of roles. In addition to repeating parts played during the regular season, she took over some new ones. Several of the

⁹¹ The New-Orleans Bee, May 17, 1836.

⁹² Ibid., May 19, 1836.

⁹³ Ibid., May 28, 1836.

⁹⁴ Ibid., May 28, 30, June 1, 1836. Kendall, however, pp. 135, 140, stated that the regular season lasted from November 30, 1835 to June 4, 1835. Advertisements in both the Bee and the Commercial Bulletin gave the closing date.

actresses, who had played important roles during the regular season, departed before the summer season opened, but apparently Caldwell felt that Mrs. Hunt had matured sufficiently to play leading roles, for he gave her the opportunity to do so.⁹⁵

A special holiday program closed the summer session on July 4. During the course of the evening, Hunt sang The Star Spangled Banner, and Mrs. Hunt delivered a patriotic address.⁹⁶

After the season closed, Mrs. Hunt went to Louisville, where she presumably acted during the remainder of the summer.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Ibid., June 1-July 2, 1836 in advertisements for the St. Charles Street Theatre, note her appearances in the following roles: Mary Copp (Charles II), Mrs. Fitzallen (Simpson & Co.), Zephyrina (The Lady and the Devil), Lady Alford (The Children in the Wood), Therese (Therese), Maria Darlington (A Roland for An Oliver), Margaret (A New Way to Pay Old Debts), five characters (A Day in Paris), four characters (Taurils in America), Kate (The Prairie Girls), Nell Gwynn (The King's Word), Catherine (The Sledge Driver), Colin (Nature and Philosophy), Aurelia (The Young Widow), and Paul (The Wandering Boys).

⁹⁶ Ibid., July 2, 1836.

⁹⁷ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 78.

The Hunts and Mrs. Kinlock⁹⁸ returned to the St. Charles Street Theatre for the second season, and the season was a very busy one for young Mrs. Hunt. Her name appeared frequently in newspaper advertisements, and later she wrote:

Acting on Sunday came into fashion this season, and as at that time I was too good a Christian to do that, and as I acted in everything, there was a great deal of trouble to get my parts studied for one night. My engagement closed with the season.⁹⁹

It is doubtful if she played in everything, despite her sweeping statement, since two or three plays were presented each evening, some of which were slight pieces with small casts, others were ballet productions and still others were Italian operas. However, it is possible that she performed in at least one piece as a general rule, although there are no records to substantiate this supposition.

The season opened with Peter Wilkins, or the Flying Islanders, which was advertised as "a grand spectacle."¹⁰⁰ It

⁹⁸ Gafford, p. 122, listed the name of "Kinlock" in the men of the stock company for the season. This is an error for Kinlock, according to Mrs. Drew's word, died in Jamaica some years before. Strangely enough, Kendall, p. 142, stated: "At this time also John Kinlock associated himself with the company in order to be near his wife and stepdaughter. Kinlock was a very fine actor and stage manager." Neither Gafford nor Kendall give a clue as to their source of information.

⁹⁹ Autobiographical Sketch, pp. 78, 81.

¹⁰⁰ The Louisiana Courier, November 14, 1836.

had been presented at least eight times the previous season, and was on the boards at least five times this season. Only once in two seasons did Mrs. Hunt's name appear in the advertising for the production. On March 4, the date of the final production, a partial cast list was given and Mrs. Hunt was listed as Eurica.¹⁰¹

Charles Mason was the first star to appear with the St. Charles company this season, and Mrs. Hunt appeared in several productions in which he starred. Mason opened his engagement with Macbeth, but it is not known whether or not she appeared in this play.¹⁰² She did, however, play Ophelia to his Hamlet and Mrs. N. M. Bannister's Queen Gertrude.¹⁰³ And she was Lady Ann in Richard III which featured Mason in the title role and Mrs. Bannister in the queen's role.¹⁰⁴ In a production of Pizarro, the visiting actor played the role of the Spanish conqueror, Mrs. Bannister was Elvira, and Mrs. Hunt, Cora.¹⁰⁵ In a production of William Tell, Mrs. Hunt again played her childhood role of Albert. Mason played Tell and Mrs. Bannister, Emma.¹⁰⁶ Mason's last appearance seems to have

¹⁰¹ Ibid., March 4, 1837.

¹⁰² Gafford, p. 122.

¹⁰³ The New-Orleans Bee, November 18, 1836.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., November 21, 1836.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., November 23, 1836.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., November 22, 1836.

been in Sardanapolus, or the Greek Slave. He played the role of Sardanapolus and Mrs. Hunt was Myrrha, the Greek slave. On the same evening, the visiting actor and Mrs. Bannister shared honors in Katherine and Petrucio a version of Shakespeare's play which was popular in the theatres of that period.¹⁰⁷

During the first few weeks of the season, several plays were repeated in which Mrs. Hunt appeared the previous season. It is not known whether she played her old roles in the same place since frequently only the name of the play appeared in the advertisement. Among these plays were The Secret, Nature and Philosophy, A Day in Paris, and The Sledge Driver.¹⁰⁸ A new role, apparently, was that of Constance in The Provost of Bruges, or The Noble Serf.¹⁰⁹

Before the end of November, at least two newspapers published comments on the poor attendance at the St. Charles,¹¹⁰ and one of them, in a second item, commented upon the company:

The ladies and gentlemen attached to the corps dramatique of the St. Charles may fairly challenge

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., November 25, 1836.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., November 14-17, 1836.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., November 28, 1836.

¹¹⁰ The Louisiana Courier, November 28 and The New-Orleans Bee, November 29, 1836.

competition with those of any other theatre in the Union. We hope we shall not be considered invidious in referring in particular to Messieurs Barton, Pearson, Bannister and Hunt, and to Mesdames Shaw and Bannister. The former lady is an accomplished histrionist; her conception of character is very chaste and free from those faults so common to the profession.¹¹¹

Even though Mrs. Hunt played secondary leads during Nason's engagement, the writer of the foregoing commentary did not mention her work.

From November 29 through December 9, Mrs. Hunt's name did not appear in advertisements. Mrs. Shaw played the leading roles during this period, and if Mrs. Hunt appeared at all, it must have been in subordinate parts, the managers did not think it necessary to advertise for her.¹¹²

On December 10, the young actress appeared in a production of The Gamester along with Barton, Pearson, and Mrs. Drake. Mrs. Hunt was Charlotte.¹¹³ Two days later she was advertised in the role of Taffine in a farce called Three and the Deuce.¹¹⁴

The St. Charles Theatre advertisement for December 13, called the public's attention to the fact that

¹¹¹ The New-Orleans Bee, December 1, 1836.

¹¹² The Louisiana Courier, November 29-December 6, 1836.

¹¹³ Ibid., December 10, 1836.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., December 12, 1836. This farce was repeated December 15, 1836, and February 9, 1837.

"legitimate Comedy" would be presented at the house with "unexceptional casts." The advertisement listed the following "distinguished artists: "Messrs. Balls, Barton, Finn, Holland, and Mrs. Shaw, as extraordinary aid, and Messrs. Pearson, Bannister, DeBar, Radcliffe, and Williams, and Mrs. Bannister, Hunt, Saunders, and Kinlock in the regular stock." The plays mentioned for presentation were: Wild Oats, Agnes de Vere, All in the Wrong, A Way to Keep Him, Much Ado About Nothing, and The West Indian.¹¹⁵

In the partial cast lists advertising the above-named plays Mrs. Hunt's name did not appear. Apparently she played small roles if she appeared at all. She was seen in some shorter pieces during December including Forty Thieves, in which she played Morgiana; The Weathercock, in which she was Variella; and Too Late for Dinner, in which she was Miss Somerton.¹¹⁶

During the engagement of Miss Melton from the Theatre Royal London, a reviewer called Mrs. Hunt's appearance "successful" on the visiting actress' first night. The two plays presented were The Country Girl and The Young Huzzard. Mrs. Hunt's role was not cited.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ The New-Orleans Bee, December 13, 1836.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., December 14, 17, 1836, and The Louisiana Courier, December 22, 1836.

¹¹⁷ The New Orleans Bee, December 30, 1836.

Charles Mason returned for another engagement, and Mrs. Centliver's comedy, The Wonder, A Woman Keeps a Secret, was presented on his first night, Mason appearing as Don Felix, Mrs. Shaw as Donna Violante, and Mrs. Hunt as Isabella. On the same night the opera John of Paris was presented. Hunt sang the title role, and Mrs. Thielman, a singer of some distinction, was the Princess of Navarre.¹¹⁸ Mrs. Hunt appeared in the role of Rosa. The opera seems to have been a favorite one and was performed several times during the season.¹¹⁹

Mrs. Hunt's name appeared in cast lists several times in January, 1847, during the engagement of Mrs. Pritchard. She was Ottavia in The Brigand, Jeanie Deans in The Heart of Mid-lothian, Minna in Monsieur Jacques, Mrs. Belmour in Is He Jealous? and Belle in The Rover's Bride.¹²⁰

Mrs. Hunt's name did not appear in advertisements during the remainder of the first month of the new year, but in all probability she continued to play.

A series of articles entitled The Tribunal of

¹¹⁸ Ibid., December 29, 1836.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., December 31, 1836, January 4, March 7, 17, 1837.

¹²⁰ Ibid., January 7-16, 1837.

Three appeared in one New Orleans newspaper during the season. One during the month of January was concerned with the St. Charles Company:

The St. Charles Theatre already occupies a conspicuous place in the tableau of the American Drama. Its progress has been unexampled in the history of any similar institution, and it is rapidly becoming the great histrionic nucleus around which minor stars are destined to twinkle, as satellites circle a planet of superior lustre.

Take a view of the present company. Is it not incomparably more complete, versatile, and better organized than any in the United States? And does it not confessedly equal many of Europe? When the names of Barton, Bannister, Pearson, Latham, Williams, Finn, Holland, etc. are adduced as evidences of its strength, and those of Mesdames Shaw, Bannister and Hunt, and Miss Melton are known to compose, in part its female department, will its superiority be, for a moment questioned? We think not.

The writer went on to state that the series of articles proposed to examine the work of the various members of the company, "whose general excellencies nightly please the public mind and attract the public eye."¹²¹

During an engagement of A. A. Addams, Mrs. Hunt played Tibby in His Master's Rival, which was given as afterpiece to Virginus which starred Addams.¹²² She played with him in Hamlet, taking the role of Ophelia,¹²³

¹²¹ The Louisiana Courier, January 26, 1837. Mrs. Hunt's work was examined in article number twenty-seven which appeared on April 4. It will be cited later.

¹²² The New-Orleans Bee, February 1, 1837.

¹²³ Ibid., February 9, 1837.

and in William Tell, again playing Albert.¹²⁴

At a benefit for Finn, a regular member of the company, Mrs. Hunt played Julia Tarragon in The School for Reform.¹²⁵

Caldwell made four appearances on his stage as an actor in February, appearing in The West Indian, Much Ado About Nothing, The School for Scandal, and The Honeymoon. In addition, he took a benefit at which time Laugh When You Can was presented. Apparently these plays were part of the series of comedies promised by Caldwell some weeks before. Since only partial cast lists were given in advertisements, it is not known how many times Mrs. Hunt appeared in these plays. In Cumberland's play she was listed in the cast list as Charlotte Rusport.¹²⁶

When J. W. Wallack played an engagement at the St. Charles, Mrs. Hunt was Violette in The Hazard of the Die.¹²⁷ Doubtless she appeared in other plays in which he was featured, but her name was not included in partial cast lists which appeared during his engagement.

¹²⁴ The Louisiana Courier, February 11, 1837.

¹²⁵ The New-Orleans Bee, February 14, 1837.

¹²⁶ The Louisiana Courier, February 16-23, 1837.

¹²⁷ The New Orleans Bee, February 24, 1837.

Wallack opened this play February 22. Mrs. Hunt probably appeared in that cast also.

Madame Celeste came to the St. Charles again this season and danced several ballets. Apparently Mrs. Hunt danced more prominent roles in these pieces than she had in the previous season, for she wrote:

During this season Madame Celeste produced "Le Dieu" and "Le Bayadère." Mr. George Holland went to Havana as agent, and engaged two dancers to alternate the second "Bayadère." At the end of the piece Celeste sent for me (we were all Bayadères) and said, "Louise, you must be the second Bayadère to-morrow; I will not have those coming from Havana. They are too dreadful!" She denied all remonstrances, and I danced the trial dance for twelve nights with considerable applause.¹²⁸

Mrs. Hunt was billed as Zulma in the cast list for the opening performance.¹²⁹ When a cast list was printed for a later production, she was listed in the role of Fatima, "principal dancing Bayadère."¹³⁰ Le Dieu et La Bayadère seems to have aroused the most interest of any of Madame Celeste's ballets this season, if we are to judge from the number of productions.¹³¹ She was seen also in some of her other ballets, such as The French Spy, The Wept-of-the-Wish-ton-Wish, The Wizard Skiff, The Moorish Page, and Yelva, the Orphan of Russia.¹³²

¹²⁸ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 78.

¹²⁹ The New-Orleans Bee, March 21, 1837.

¹³⁰ The Louisiana Courier, April 18, 1837. There seems to have been only one production at this time.

¹³¹ The New-Orleans Bee, March 21-31, 1837, Le Dieu et La Bayadère occupied the boards with a variety of afterpieces.

¹³² Gafford, p. 135.

If Mrs. Hunt danced in these, it is not known, for her name did not appear in advertisements.

In March, the actress appeared in a play called The Unknown, or the Demon's Gift, written by J. Rees of New Orleans. Mrs. Hunt was Rosa in this cast.¹³³ Also during the month she took over the role of Mary Copp in Charles II, a musical piece which featured her husband, and she also played Mary in The Happiest Day of My Life.¹³⁴

Apparently Mrs. Fritchard's first engagement was successful, for she returned again in April, appearing first in La Tour De Nesle. Mrs. Hunt was Kate in The Ocean Child which appeared on the same bill.¹³⁵ During this engagement, Mrs. Hunt was also seen again as Julian in The Wandering Boys, Mrs. Fritchard taking the role of Paul. Mrs. Hunt was also Mrs. Malfort in The Soldier's Daughter, and Marietta in a new farce entitled Mrs. G.¹³⁶

The "Tribunal of Three," which had undertaken to analyze and criticize the performances of the members of the St. Charles Company, considered Mrs. Hunt's acting in their article of April 4:

¹³³ The New-Orleans Bee, March 2, The Louisiana Courier, March 6, 1837.

¹³⁴ Ibid., March 10, 28, 1837.

¹³⁵ Ibid., April 1, 1837.

¹³⁶ Ibid., April 7, 8, 10, 1837.

We do not know that we have ever undertaken the claims of any of the talented members of this theatre with the same heartfelt pleasure which we experienced in the consciousness of being about to render justice to the histrionical talent of this young lady. Her exertions for the mastery of her profession, have been so intense, invariable and diversified in every range of the drama, that to pretermitt her pretensions or "damn her with faint praise," would be an act of gross injustice. Mrs. Hunt is the universal favorite, we may say the pet of the New Orleans public. From her earliest infancy, she has been the denizen of the mimic world; and her youngest recollections are associated with its triumphs. When a tiny child, she wielded its tiny sceptre with infantine grace, and more than infantine origin, and her performances even then gave abundant promise of that versatility, tact, taste, and talent which now throw a charm around her every effort. The prestige of her success has not remained unfulfilled, and the youthful claimant, at the present day, is perhaps the most generally successful actress in America.

We like to see Mrs. Hunt upon the stage. Unlike the generality of performers who tread its boards with a hackneyed and careless gait, she seems to acknowledge it as her appropriate sphere. She always enters upon her duties with an appearance of natural alacrity and spirit which manifests the delight which she experiences in their execution, and constantly infuses in her personations a naivete and genuine simplicity, which never fail to charm. It is this artless, untaught enthusiasms, this love of her profession, and uniform willingness to advance its interests which have made Mrs. Hunt what she is, and will, in time, decorate her young brow with that brightest and most durable coronal of worth--public approval. The best actors of the day occasionally (to use the technical language of the stage) walk through a part. Such is never the case with this lady. Whatever may be the nature of the character which she has to sustain, however insufficient or inferior to her real merits, it is always studied with care and personated to life. Hence her success. We have seen Mrs. Hunt in every species of character, from deep heart rending tragedy, to broad moving farce, and we hazard nothing in saying we have never seen her fail. Her versatility is indeed wonderful. Look at her Cora--what touching pathos does she impart to this beautiful creation! The mingled playfulness of youth blended with the deep toned tenderness

of the young mother, the all absorbing love of the devoted wife, and the pure patriotism of the Peruvian, are delineated by this lady, with masterly effect. Take her again as a laughing, rattling mischief loving chambermaid; with what ease and humor does she identify herself with the author's grotesque fancies. How vivacious, how graceful, and yet how natural. Nothing forced, nothing overcharged. No attempt to grasp too much, to be too gay, too light, too natural. And yet again behold her in La Beyadere, with naught but the untaught untrammelled graces of youth, dividing plaudits with the accomplished Celeste, and associating her image in our recollection of all that is animated, graceful, and poetical. We feel that we are enthusiastic in writing of this lady, but 'tis an enthusiasm inspired by excellence, and we do not seek to restrain its gush; nor shall we consider ourselves unrewarded for our labors, if this little encomium but enlist another votary in the cause of genuine and modest worth.¹³⁷

--A.

This was high praise for the actress of secondary roles, but it was the kind of praise she frequently received during her long career in the theatre.

Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Barnes joined the company for an engagement in April, and Mrs. Hunt's name did not appear in advertisements during that time.¹³⁸

Early in May the Hunts were seen in another performance of Charles II which served as an afterpiece to Chiara de Rosenberg, sung by the Italian Opera Company which was then featured.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ The Louisiana Courier, April 4, 1837.

¹³⁸ Ibid., April 11-15, 1837.

¹³⁹ Ibid., May 3, 1837.

Mrs. Hunt's last appearance of the season at the St. Charles seems to have been on May 6, at which time she appeared in a farce called This First Champagne on the occasion of Barton's benefit.¹⁴⁰ Strangely enough, her name appeared in two advertisements on May 9, in the St. Charles Advertisement for This First Champagne, and in the rival American Theatre's advertisement for Turn Out. Mrs. Hunt's role in the last-named play was that of Marian Ramsay.¹⁴¹ Mrs. Pritchard was the star appearing at the American on that night. Apparently people in New Orleans were mystified by Mrs. Hunt's appearance at another theatre, for a writer in one newspaper said:

The stock actors are all taking benefits; the charming Mrs. Hunt takes hers at the Camp/American and why and wherefore we know not. She has been a slave to the St. Charles, and Celeste was to have played for her benefit so we understand from Mr. Elliott. Some mystery here. I will find it out!¹⁴²

However, if the writer of the item above ever found out the reason for Mrs. Hunt's change from one theatre to another, he seems not to have communicated it to the newspaper in which the first notation occurred. Perhaps she made the change because of the disagreement

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., May 9, 1837.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., and The New-Orleans Bee, of the same date.

¹⁴² The Louisiana Courier, May 10, 1837.

over Sunday performances mentioned previously.

While at the Camp, Mrs. Hunt participated in the actor Farren's benefit. On that occasion, she was Kate O'Brien in Perfection and sang several songs.¹⁴³

Mrs. Hunt's engagement at the American ended on May 12, at which time she played Harriet in Is He Jealous?¹⁴⁴ Earlier in the season she had played Mrs. Belmour in the same play. On May 13, she was given a benefit and appeared as Mrs. Blithesome in Love and a Bunch.¹⁴⁵

Before proceeding to Louisville for a summer engagement, Mrs. Hunt played at the Eagle Theatre in Mobile, Alabama. In a study of the theatre of Mobile, a historian noted:

The Eagle Theatre opened on May 2 to a large and brilliant audience. (The theatre first had concerts, light farces and dance numbers.) The concerts were abandoned entirely and the names of Mr. and Mrs. Hunt (formerly Miss Lane), Mrs. Kinlock, Mr. and Mrs. Burke, all of the St. Charles Theatre, and Janvier, Archer, Sargent, Corri, Kelly, and Foster began to appear in the advertisements.¹⁴⁶

According to Duggar, the Eagle Theatre closed about the nineteenth or twentieth of July. "Some of the actors," she wrote, "must have been desirous of continuing

¹⁴³The New-Orleans Bee, May 10, 1837.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., May 12, 1837.

¹⁴⁵ Smither, p. 274.

¹⁴⁶ Mary Morgan Duggar, "The Theatre in Mobile, 1822-60," Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Alabama, 1941, p. 74.

operations, for on July 21, a petition from Mr. Janvier and others was submitted to the mayor and aldermen asking that theatrical exhibitions be allowed without a license." However, nothing came of the petition and the aldermen voted that "the petitioners have leave to withdraw their petition."¹⁴⁷

After this engagement, the Hunts apparently went to Louisville, and seemingly, they stayed longer than the summer season, for a gossip column item which appeared in a New Orleans newspaper stated that Madame Augusta, Mr. and Mrs. Hunt, and Mr. Thorne "drew crowded houses with the Bayadere [sic] in Louisville."¹⁴⁸ It would seem, then, that Mrs. Hunt must have danced in this ballet with Madame Augusta as well as with Celeste.

The Hunts went south again the following season, this time to Vicksburg, Mississippi, to the theatre operated by James M. "Long Tom Coffin" Smith and James Thorne. Apparently this engagement grew out of their summer association with these well-known theatre managers. Mrs. Hunt was engaged to play "chambermaids and all like business."¹⁴⁹ Probably Hunt signed on as a singer.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 74, 75.

¹⁴⁸ The New-Orleans Bee, October 23, 1837.

¹⁴⁹ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 81.

Not much is known of the Vicksburg theatre this season, since so many newspapers and records were lost during the Civil War. Free stated in his excellent study of the theatre of southwestern Mississippi that the season opened on December 27, 1837 with the Ravels, who played for ten nights.¹⁵⁰ A newspaper item dated January 4, which announced the re-engagement of the Ravels for three more nights, stated also that "Mr. and Mrs. Hunt have returned."¹⁵¹ Seemingly, then, they must have been in Vicksburg sometime prior to January 4, 1838.

The first notice of their appearance in a production was found in a newspaper dated January 8. On that occasion, a benefit for Jane Mason, Ion and A Roland for an Oliver were presented. Miss Mason appeared in the title role in the first play, and Mrs. Hunt and her mother, Mrs. Kinlock, appeared in the second play.¹⁵² According to Free the dramatic season began on that day. It seems rather strange, however, that it started with a benefit performance.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Joseph Miller Free, "The Theatre in Southwestern Mississippi to 1840." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, State University of Iowa, 1941, p. 390.

¹⁵¹ The Vicksburg Daily Register, January 4, 1838.

¹⁵² Ibid., January 8, 1838.

¹⁵³ Free, p. 390.

A month later, John Sefton, a member of the company that had come to America with Mrs. Hunt and her mother, was given a benefit. Henry IV, or the Humors of Falstaff was produced and Thorne, Scott, Mason and Watson were listed as cast members along with Sefton. An advertisement announcing this benefit stated:

In the course of the evening a variety of singing by Mr. Hunt, Mrs. Hunt, and John Sefton; to conclude with a new vaudeville of HE'S NOT A MISS, in which Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. Watson, and Messrs. Hunt and John Sefton will appear.¹⁵⁴

Mrs. Hunt took a benefit on February 12, at which time A Bold Stroke for a Husband and The Happiest Day of My Life were presented.¹⁵⁵

Some time later Mrs. Hunt's name appeared in the cast of Bombastes Furiosos in the role of Distafino.¹⁵⁶

In existing newspapers there are few reviews or comments upon the productions at Vicksburg during the season. However, one such comment, according to Free, had to do with Mrs. Hunt's being hissed for failing to appear at the benefit of Clementine DeBar. Seemingly Miss DeBar, who had been a member of the St. Charles Company in New Orleans with Mrs. Hunt, was a favorite player in Vicksburg, also. Free quoted the newspaper as saying that

¹⁵⁴ The Vicksburg Daily Register, February 7, 1838.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., February 12, 1838.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., March 1, 1838.

the effort on the part of the few persons who attempted to hiss "recoiled upon the heads of its authors Severe as [the experience]--undoubtedly must have been to her mind, we have no doubt it will redound to her decided advantage."¹⁵⁷

On March 26, a newspaper published a review of Miss Ellen Tree's¹⁵⁸ performance in The Hunchback. The reviewer noted that "she was exceedingly well sustained last evening, particularly by Mrs. Hunt, Howard and Scott," and went on to say: "Mrs. Hunt pleases better and better. There is not a more charming and lively actress on earth." The same reviewer commented that "the house was literally crowded to overflowing with fashion and beauty," which afforded "a feast for the four hundred inconsolable . bachelors in the 'pit'!"¹⁵⁹

Another benefit was scheduled for Mrs. Hunt on April 16.¹⁶⁰ Newspapers for the day of the benefit and the day following are missing, and there apparently is no

¹⁵⁷ Free, p. 395.

¹⁵⁸ Ellen Tree (1805-1880) played several engagements in America with success before her marriage to Charles Kean (1811-1868). With Kean, whom she married in 1842, she toured America on several occasions. They were highly regarded in both their native country and in America for their Shakespearian revivals.

¹⁵⁹ The Vicksburg Daily Register, March 25, 1838.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., April 14, 1838.

record of the bills presented. According to Free, Hunt was paid \$176.00 on the day following the benefit.¹⁶¹ He was of the opinion that Hunt was paid the amount accruing from the benefit.

Mrs. Clara Fisher Maeder played a starring engagement in January and in the middle of April.¹⁶² Some time prior to this engagement, probably when Clara Fisher Maeder and the so-called "second Clara Fisher," played together in New Orleans, the two became estranged. However, during the Vicksburg engagement, their difficulties were forgotten and the two became friends and remained friends for the remainder of their lives. Indeed, many years later when Mrs. Maeder returned to the stage after a period of retirement, she became a member of a stock company in a theatre managed by Mrs. Drew, the former Louisa Lane Hunt. Mrs. Maeder, late in life, related the following anecdote about the circumstances which cemented their friendship:

¹⁶¹ Free obtained this information from a manuscript compiled by J. W. T. Smith about 1908. Smith used his father's account books. According to Free, two copies of the manuscript existed in 1941, one in the Mississippi State Department of Archives and History, and the other in the home of F. P. Keller, 75 W. Ashland Avenue, Doylestown, Penna. The copy in Mississippi was reported missing in 1951. The whereabouts of the second copy is not known to this writer.

¹⁶² Free, p. 393.

. . . on the last night of my engagement I was struggling through the performance in misery, hardly able to walk or talk, but determined to fight it out somehow. Everybody thought I had a touch of yellow fever, then prevalent, and probably I had. I had, against the doctor's orders left New Orleans. No one supposed I would be able to play, and Mr. Maeder, who was in New Orleans, was written to and told to come on, if possible. Well, owing to some foolish misunderstanding or misconception, Louisa and I had quarreled a year or two before, and were not on speaking terms. I forget the trifling occasion of our silly quarrel, but we had been passing each other on the stage for some two or three days, and neither would attempt to make or notice the other.

There was a sofa placed for me by the wings, and as the last piece ended and I was lying down almost unable to move, she knelt down and kissing me while putting her arms around my neck said, "Clara, dear, I can't stand this. You are very ill and have no business to be playing, and you must come and live with me until you are well and strong again, and I won't permit you to go away, or even to stay among strangers at the hotel." And she, with Mr. Hunt, carried me to a carriage, and to their comfortable little home, where she nursed me like a sister, and through her care and the Lord's mercy, I became well again.¹⁶³

The season ended late in April,¹⁶⁴ and Mrs. Hunt may have gone to a Thorne and Smith theatre for the summer season. At any event, she appeared under their management again the following season, but in a different capacity. The next season she was the leading lady of the stock company at the neighboring city of Natchez, and a new phase of her theatrical career was begun.

¹⁶³ Clara Fisher Maeder, Autobiography ed. by Douglas Taylor. (New York: Dunlap Society, 1897), pp. 73, 74.

¹⁶⁴ Free, p. 390.

CHAPTER III
LEADING LADY AND STAR (1838-1844)

Louisa Lane Hunt, former child prodigy and player of "chambermaids and like business," was promoted to the important position of leading lady in the stock company which James R. Thorne and Sol Smith assembled to open the 1838-39 season at the Main Street Theatre, Natchez, Mississippi. Hunt and Mrs. Kinlock were also members of the company.

Doubtless Mrs. Hunt made her first appearance on the opening night, December 10,¹ but records of the performance are not extant and one does not know the roles she played. On December 11, she appeared in Charles II. She was Mary Copp, and Thorne, who had been a singer in England prior to his coming to America, played Captain Copp.²

Mazeppa appeared on the boards of this theatre on the nineteenth and twentieth along with The Dead Shot. Mrs. Hunt appeared in both plays, acting Zemila in the former and Louisa in the latter.³ Mazeppa was presented

¹ Free, p. 416.

² Ibid., 555.

³ Ibid.

on December 21 with a different afterpiece, The Hole in the Wall. Again Mrs. Hunt appeared in both plays, acting the same role in the equestrienne drama and Cecile in the afterpiece.⁴

On New Year's night this announcement appeared in a newspaper advertisement:

The Managers of the Theatre, in presenting the compliments of the season to their friends and patrons, beg leave to assure them that neither pains nor expense shall be spared to render this establishment in every respect worthy the encouragement of a liberal and enlightened public.

The Will, or a Lesson for Daughters was presented on this night with Mrs. Hunt as Albina Mandeville. Between the pieces, Davis, of the company, sang The Star Spangled Banner. The orchestra played the usual grand overture, and the program concluded with what was called "the new and beautiful Vaudeville," in which Mrs. Hunt as Susanne, Hunt as Chevalier Duval, and Mrs. Kinlock as the Marchioness de Vermont appeared. The afterpiece was The Ladder of Love, featuring Silsbee.⁵

This program, which was varied in nature, received at least one favorable comment in a daily newspaper:

The performances on "New Year's night," reflected much credit to the whole company and pleased a crowded audience, all of whom were in the spirit to

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Daily Gazette, January 1, 1839.

do justice to every performer whatever prejudices they had formed before. It was such a present to the managers which we predicted--which they deserve, and which we hope may often be witnessed.⁶

On January 3, a visiting star named Howard⁷ made his first appearance in Honeymoon, Mrs. Hunt playing Juliana and her mother Violante.⁸

Mrs. Hunt appeared as Pauline in The Lady of Lyons in the first production of the play in Natchez. Claude Melnotte was portrayed by Howard, and the large cast included Mrs. Kinlock in the role of Madame Deschappelles. The Pauline of this performance later reported that the play was very successful.⁹ Free commented that The Lady of Lyons "enjoyed the longest run in the history of our era: six consecutive performances early in January," and noted that it was produced "no less than thirteen times" before the end of the season.¹⁰ The following comment appeared in a Natchez newspaper after the opening of this play:

⁶ Ibid., January 3, 1839.

⁷ Free, p. 416, has identified him as C.D.S. Howard.

⁸ The Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Daily Gazette, January 3, 1839.

⁹ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 82. (Apparently Mrs. Hunt did not remember who played the male role for she wrote "Mr. C. Horn(?) was the Claude Melnotte.")

¹⁰ Free, p. 424.

Last evening Mr. Howard appeared on our boards and won golden opinions. He was nobly sustained by Mrs. Hunt--but further we say not. The house was a good one. We now consider the theatrical season fully open in our city. The "Lady of Lyons" will again crowd the house this evening, or we are no prophets.¹¹

The Irish Tutor was the afterpiece on the opening night of this play, and a new play served as the afterpiece on the second night. It was a farce called The Roman Nose. Mrs. Hunt and her mother both played in this, the former taking the role of Gabriella, and the latter, Mrs. Superfine.¹²

A commentary on the January 5 production did not appear in the newspaper until two days later:

The house was a bumper on Saturday, and the "Lady of Lyons" was applauded to the echo. The chaste language, deep pathos and glowing poetry of this creation of Bulwer's genius, seems to have a spirit stirring effect on the entire CORPS DRAMATIQUE, and scarcely one appears indifferent in his acting. It is thus that a generous public should be lured into the support of the drama, by the best acting of the best dramas. . . .

The "Roman Nose" did not give so general satisfaction: it is too farcical, and like most Roman noses altogether too long--nose, nosey--all nose. . . .¹³

On the third night, still another farce made its first appearance in Natchez. This one was entitled The

¹¹ The Mississippi Free Trade and Natchez Daily Gazette, January 5, 1839.

¹² Ibid., January 4, 5, 1839.

¹³ Ibid., January 7, 1839.

Old Gentleman. A review in a local newspaper commented upon the success of the two plays in this southern city.

Night before last, the "Lady of Lyons" was enacted the third time (last night the fourth) before one of the largest and most fashionable theatrical audiences ever assembled in Natchez. There must have been power, both in the drama and its performers, when a large audience, both ladies and gentlemen, are brought to tears by the representations of the poet and histrion.

Mr. Howard, in Claude Melnotte, was all that Bulwer himself could have wished; Silsbee as Glavis, Davis as Beauseant, Phillips as Deschappelles; and more than all, Mrs. Hunt as Pauline,--were all that could have been wished. Mrs. Kinloch /sic/ as Mad. Deschappelles made some good hits, and gave general pleasure.

In the farce of the "Old Gentleman" every thing succeeded to admiration. . . .¹⁴

The fourth performance, which was advertised as the last, was presented with The Ladder of Love. It is not known in how many of the afterpieces Mrs. Hunt appeared, for cast members were given infrequently in newspaper advertisements. The fourth performance, however, was not the last, and on January 9, an advertisement announced that "in compliance with the request of many families," the play would be presented on Wednesday evening for the last time along with the comedy, Simpson & Co.¹⁵ This production did not end the engagement,

¹⁴ Ibid., January 9, 1839.

¹⁵ Ibid., January 9, 10, 1839.

however, and "positively the last night" headed the announcement of the January 10 performance. The farce, A Peculiar Position, also said to be a "first production," was announced for the same bill.¹⁶ A review which appeared after these productions made special mention of Mrs. Hunt's acting:

Last night and the night previous the "Lady of Lyons" was all the rage, and drew large houses. Mrs. Hunt is certainly a sweet actress and deserves all the praise which the Natchez audience have so liberally bestowed upon her. She is so lady-like in her deportment, so devoid of theatrical start and clap-trap, that we would willingly pledge ourselves as far as our influence can go, to sustain her as a star, fit to shine in either hemisphere.¹⁷

Despite its apparent popularity, the play was withdrawn on January 11, and The Barber of Seville was presented. On this occasion, Mrs. Hunt, the dramatic actress of the previous evening, appeared as Rosina, a singer in the opera. Hunt had the leading role of Count Almaviva.¹⁸

No reviews of this operatic production were found, but a discussion of the theatre, which appeared some days later, praised Thorne's management and made the following comment on some of the members of the company:

In the selection of the company, such discrimination is displayed, and seldom in Natchez has been gathered

¹⁶ Ibid., January 11, 1839.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

together so much capacity as well as variety in histrionic talent. There is rarely found in a stock company the operatic effect that is produced by the melody of Mrs. Hunt, with the rich and manly accompaniment of her husband, borne along by the deep and mellow tones of Mr. Thorne.¹⁹

The Barber of Seville was presented again on January 16.

Following the operatic presentation, Miss Nelson visited the theatre for a starring engagement, and Mrs. Hunt did not appear for several days. The dramatic critic of the daily newspaper did not think much of Miss Nelson's ability as an actress and said: "We hope soon to be delighted with the reappearance of our favorite Mrs. Hunt!"²⁰

Dan Marble, favorite Yankee comedian, appeared for an engagement and on his last night was seen in Yankee in Time.²¹ Mrs. Hunt played "one of the sweetest and most delightful of Emily Charmons" on this occasion.²² At Marble's benefit, which followed the last night of his engagement, Mrs. Hunt was seen in the leading role in The Swiss Cottage.²³

On Mrs. Hunt's benefit night, an announcement

¹⁹ Ibid., January 16, 1839.

²⁰ Ibid., January 18, 1839.

²¹ Ibid., January 22, 1839.

²² Ibid., January 23, 1839.

²³ Ibid.

appeared in the newspaper which always seemed to show an interest in her work:

This night (and may the stars shine with their propitious influence!) is set apart for the benefit of this lady, who is no less distinguished for her powers as an actress, than for her sweetness of manners and delicacy of refinement as a lady. Since Mrs. Hunt's arrival in this city the ravens of criticism have never had a chance to croak over any fault of hers on the stage.

We predict that she will leave the City of the Bluffs as a star to shine with her own peculiar brightness in other cities, and win the applause of those who worship at the shrine of genius and beauty.

Let there be a generous display of that impulsive feeling of devotion to the virtuous fair which is the boast of Natchez. Let there be a crowded house!

From the communications received late last evening we select only one, knowing it to have emanated from a most respectable and influential source. . . .

The communication which the newspaper chose to print also urged Mississippians to support the actress' benefit:

For the Free Trader
MRS. HUNT.--This lady appeals to the public for a benefit this evening. If talent, lady-like deportment, respectability in private life, and unwearied exertions to please the public, have any claim to reward, let the citizens of Natchez prove their estimate of these qualities by giving this lady a proof of the estimation in which she is held. ²⁴

AN ADMIRER OF THE DRAMA

The newspaper writer was a better prophet than he doubtless ever knew in predicting success for the youthful actress. He echoed previous critics who had

²⁴ Ibid., January 25, 1839.

commented upon her efforts to perfect her art and please her public. Throughout her long career on the stage, critics were to make the same observation. The comment on her behavior off stage as well as in the theatre is an interesting one, in view of the fact that actresses frequently have not enjoyed the best reputations throughout the ages. Apparently, if we are to believe the reports of newspapers and her fellow actors, this actress was able to gain and hold the respect of her public throughout her long career on the stage.

Mrs. Hunt appeared again as Pauline in The Lady of Lyons on her benefit night. The farce was Brother and Sister and she played the role of Isidora in that piece.²⁵ A reviewer of the production commented: "In consequence of the inclemency of the weather the house last evening was not as large as the fame of this fair actress would have justified." The reviewer went on to say:

The enthusiasm with which Mrs. Hunt was received, and the thrilling interest she imparted to the character of Pauline in the "Lady of Lyons" were in perfect keeping with the graceful compliment of two wreaths of roses thrown from the galleries upon the stage in honor of the lovely being who was the heroine of the night. Both of these magnificent wreaths contained leaves of bank paper, with the blushing roses, to what amount we are not advised; but if they bore any proportion to the grace and feeling with which Mrs. Hunt enacted Pauline, they must have amounted to countless thousands.²⁶

²⁵ Ibid., January 25, 1839.

²⁶ Ibid., January 26, 1839.

Junius Brutus Booth opened an engagement at Natchez on January 26, appearing as Hamlet on his first night. He was supported by the former child actress who had played with him in Richard III about twelve years before. On this occasion Mrs. Hunt played Ophelia and a reviewer stated that she made the character "true to nature." He also said that her "madness was most touching," and remarked that she was "yet the gem of the tragic constellation."²⁷

Booth's leading lady later told this story of his eccentric behavior during a performance of Hamlet, possibly this one:

He [Booth] had some very odd ways at time. We were playing "Hamlet" one night in Natchez, and during Ophelia's mad-scene a cock began to crow lustily. When the curtain fell upon that fourth act this crowing became more constant; and when the manager could not find Mr. Booth to commence the next act, he looked up and saw him perched on the top of a ladder, which was the only way to reach the "flies" in that primitive theatre. The manager ascended the ladder and had quite a lengthy discussion with Mr. Booth, who at last consented to come down on condition that he should resume his high position after the play, and remain there until Jackson was re-elected President.²⁸

Booth also played in Richard III during this engagement, as well as A New Way to Pay Old Debts and King Lear. It is not known whether or not Mrs. Hunt supported him in the first two plays, but since she was the

²⁷ Ibid., January 28, 1839.

²⁸ Autobiographical Sketch, pp. 49, 50.

leading lady of the company, it is likely that she did. As Cordelia in the last-named play, Mrs. Hunt was said to have "sustained her reputation as an actress of great merit, and was every thing that Shakespeare himself could have wished."²⁹

Josephine Clifton was the next star and appeared in a round of popular plays. The local newspaper writer did not find the visiting star's efforts as pleasing as those of the regular leading lady. He wrote:

In Pauline, in the Lady of Lyons, on Saturday evening, she contrasted, to her disadvantage with Mrs. Hunt, so recently the sweet and melancholy Pauline, whose pathos could unlock the heart of cold indifference with a key of tears.³⁰

Mrs. Hunt's champion in the press again had a word of praise for her following a performance of Bianca Visconti, a play written for Miss Clifton by N. P. Willis:

On Wednesday night we are informed, not being present ourselves, that Miss Clifton had to do almost the entire business of the theatre--that the only person from whom she received any aid, was the charming little Mrs. Hunt, who is "always ready" in her part--that Miss Clifton had to prompt every mother's son of the actors who appeared in the play--that even Howard was at fault. . . .³¹

There is a gap in the record of Mrs. Hunt's performance because several weeks' papers are missing. Free

²⁹ The Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Gazette, January 31, 1839.

³⁰ Ibid., February 4, 1839.

³¹ Ibid., February 8, 1839.

noted, however, that during this time Mrs. Hunt appeared at a benefit for "Old" Smith and was seen in her role of Isidora in Brother and Sister and the role of Mariette in a play called The Death Token.³²

Miss Ellen Tree, the celebrated English actress was the next star to appear. Among the plays in which she was seen was The Hunchback. She sustained the role of Julia and Mrs. Hunt played Helen. A reviewer said that Mrs. Hunt was "perfectly at home" in the role.³³ On one occasion, Miss Tree appeared as Romeo, Mrs. Hunt as Juliet. Even though actresses of the nineteenth century liked to exhibit their versatility by occasionally being seen in a man's role, the newspaper reviewer was not heartily in accord with the practice. He conceded, however, that Miss Tree's "Romeo was better performed than any other lady could do, and in some of the scenes we had forgot that one of the softer sex was enacting Romeo." He thought that his favorite lady in stock "was great-- she showed the woman, the lover, the doting, undoubting Juliet." The writer finished his commentary by making another prediction of future greatness for Mrs. Hunt by saying: "She has won another laurel, and is destined very

³² Free, p. 560.

³³ The Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Daily Gazette, March 11, 1839.

soon, to shine as a STAR in the theatrical firmament."³⁴

The stars at the Natchez theatre followed in rapid succession. Next to appear was Edwin Forrest. His first appearance was as Othello, Mrs. Hunt acting "the gentle Desdemona." In her performance, she was said to have "showed the love she owed 'her lord,' the obedient, undoubting wife of the Moor--not to believe she had lost his love, 'till all was lost.'" It was also said that "her manner to Othello, her clinging round his neck, her wife-like affection--was just the character of Desdemona." She was also praised for dressing the player as she should be, the reviewer ending his commentary with his favorite prediction as to her future success.³⁵

Forrest played Claude Melnotte and was well received. Mrs. Hunt again played Pauline, which a newspaper reviewer said was her best part, although he thought that she performed every part that she undertook well. The reviewer said that "being so admirably sustained in Claude, she gave to Pauline all that the character wanted--pride, love, disappointment, submission and reconciliation."³⁶

Mrs. Hunt was Virginia to Forrest's Virginus at his benefit performance.³⁷ A complete record of the roles

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., March 18, 1839.

³⁶ Ibid., March 21, 1839.

³⁷ Free, p. 562.

played during this engagement is not extant. Some of the roles she played during his engagement were mentioned in an item concerning her benefit:

This lady appeals again to the liberality of the Natchez dramatic public. Her benefit is to take place tonight, and we hope it may in reality be a benefit--such a one, as has seldom before been witnessed here. Mrs. H. [sic] certainly has a claim on the lovers of the drama, for whatever character she has appeared, she has done great credit to herself and always satisfied the audience. Her personation of the characters of Desdemona, Ophelia, Lady Macbeth, and Virginia, during the late engagement of Mr. Forrest, gave her additional fame. . . .

The reviewer went on to say that "the great performer himself, (Mr. F.) we know, has spoken of her with marked commendation."³⁸

The program for the night of Mrs. Hunt's second benefit was The Belle's Stratagem and the opera, John of Paris.³⁹ Hunt's name did not appear in advertisements or reviews after the early part of the season, so it is not known whether he remained with the company during the entire time, or whether he appeared in this production of John of Paris.

In April, Miss Tree returned for another engagement and was to have played the role of Beatrice in Much Ado About Nothing. She did not arrive in time so Mrs.

³⁸ The Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Daily Gazette, April 1, 1839.

³⁹ Ibid.

Hunt "went on" in the part. The reviewer, who had always been delighted with Mrs. Hunt's performances, did not stay to see her, for he "felt no curiosity but should have been pleased to see her as 'Hero.'"⁴⁰ Little did that writer know that Mrs. Hunt was to play Beatrice with much success later and that she was to find high comedy roles her forte in later years. Presumably Mrs. Hunt again supported Miss Tree when the latter finally made her appearance.

Booth returned a second time and Mrs. Hunt and her mother, Mrs. Kinlock, were among those said to be "perfect as they generally are," in their supporting roles.⁴¹

Madame Celeste came to Natchez for an April engagement, and Mrs. Hunt appeared in at least one of her pieces, St. Mary's Eve.⁴²

Some time during the season Mrs. Hunt apparently appeared in Cinderella, for she mentioned having sung this role during the Natchez season.⁴³

May 4 was the closing date of the Natchez season⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Ibid., April 3, 1839.

⁴¹ Ibid., April 29, 1839.

⁴² Ibid., April 30, 1839.

⁴³ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 82.

⁴⁴ Free, p. 416.

and either at this time or shortly before, Mrs. Hunt's first engagement as a leading actress in stock drew to a close. It might be said to have been successful. At any event, she received favorable newspaper publicity for the variety of roles which she undertook during the season. She had an opportunity to play not only leading roles but supporting roles to several of the most prominent players of the day, and she gained experience which was to help her in future engagements.

After the Natchez engagement, the Hunts went to Philadelphia. It is not known whether they played any engagements en route. Mrs. Hunt's first appearance, upon her return to the city of her American debut as a child, seems to have been at a benefit arranged for Tom Placide. On this occasion she played Beatrice in Much Ado About Nothing to the Benedict of J. M. Field at the Chestnut Street Theatre.⁴⁵

Mrs. Hunt began a regular engagement at the American Theatre on Walnut Street as the leading lady at the highest salary known there, twenty dollars per week.⁴⁶ Durang said: "Her youthful vividness and excellence from dignified elegance and touching pathos to the broad

⁴⁵ The National Gazette and Literary Register, June 21, 1839.

⁴⁶ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 82.

whimsicalities of eccentric comedy, threw new graces around the casts of the Walnut stage rendering attractiveness doubly attractive."⁴⁷ It is not known when the engagement started, but her name was listed in an advertisement for a production of Isabella, or the Fatal Marriage and The Swiss Cottage on July 10, 1839. The leading roles in the first play were taken by Mrs. Hunt, Charles Mathews, and E. S. Conner.⁴⁸

The following day she appeared as Donna Olivia in A Bold Stroke for a Husband. George Mossop, who became her second husband some nine years later, was a member of this cast. On the same evening she and Mathews appeared in Therese.⁴⁹

On the next night she was seen in three plays. In Katherine and Petruchio she was the shrew and Mossop was the "wife tamer." In the second, The Broken Sword, she played Myrtillo and in the third, A Day After the Wedding, she played Lady Elizabeth Freelove and sang several songs.⁵⁰

Mrs. Hunt took the stage July 13 for two plays, Englishmen in India and Raymond and Agnes. She was Sally

⁴⁷ Durang, IV, 158.

⁴⁸ The Public Ledger, July 10, 1839.

⁴⁹ Ibid., July 11, 1839.

⁵⁰ Ibid., July 12, 1839.

Scraggs in the first and Margaretta in the second.⁵¹

After this strenuous beginning, she seems to have had a few days respite. Then she appeared in Lucille in which she sang again.⁵²

When J. H. Oxley came to the Walnut as a star, Mrs. Hunt played Elvira in Pizarro. This appears to have been a new role for her as she had been billed as Cora on previous occasions.⁵³

The bill for August 10 gave her two roles, Rosalie Somers in Town and Country and Maria Darlington in A Roland for an Oliver.⁵⁴

During the remainder of the summer period, Mrs. Hunt appeared in a variety of roles.⁵⁵

During the engagement of James Wallack, Mrs. Hunt played supporting roles in Hamlet, Pizarro, and Tortosa, the Usurer.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Ibid., July 13, 1839.

⁵² Ibid., July 17, 1839.

⁵³ Ibid., August 9, 1839.

⁵⁴ Ibid., August 10, 1839.

⁵⁵ Ibid., August 10-September 14, 1839 noted her appearance in the following roles: Kate Bellemont (Captain Kyd, or the Wizard of the Sea), Magdalena (The Bandit Dost, or the Hut of the Swamp), Anne Boleyn (The Youthful Queen), Kate O'Brien (Perfection), Gertrude (A Loan of a Lover), Catharine Ormadoff (The Conquering Game), Ravinia (The Miller and His Men), Caroline Gayton (Catching an Heiress), and Harriet (The Rum Old Commodore).

⁵⁶ Ibid., August 26-September 14, 1839.

In the relatively short summer season, Mrs. Hunt seems to have learned several new roles and played in a variety of stage productions. Her work must have been satisfactorily received, for she was engaged for the winter season by the veteran theatre manager Francis C. Wemyss, who was then the manager of the Walnut Street house.

The winter season opened on September 16 with Edwin Forrest, a favorite in his native Philadelphia, in a starring engagement. The first play was Virginus with Mrs. Hunt again in the role of Virginia. She also appeared as Calanthe in Damon and Pythias, Senoria in The Gladiator, Nahmekie in Metamora, and Desdemona in Othello, all favorite Forrest vehicles. She was also seen in several afterpieces during his engagement.⁵⁷

On September 24, Wemyss presented Richelieu, his most elaborate production of the season. Later he described it in these words:

. . .I produced "Richelieu" in a style that surprised everybody. The dresses cost me six hundred dollars and were made by A. J. Allen. The costumes, the exact age of Louis XIII of France, the scenery new, the chairs and tables of the same style and date; so perfect was everything, that after the first night Mr. Forrest called me into his room, and after many compliments concluded thus: "For what you have done for the honor of the profession I will play one night

⁵⁷ Ibid., September 16-October 1, 1839.

gratuitously for you at the end of this engagement; select any play you think proper." Such a proffer, on such an occasion, from such a man, was a feather in the cap of the manager, which no one has been able to pluck away from me. I never heard of his being equally liberal to any of my contemporaries.⁵⁸

Despite the elaborate production, and although the play was well acted, a controversy over an increase in prices caused people, particularly the pit patrons to stay away. The receipts of the first night were only \$385, the second \$368, the third \$367, and the fourth \$342.⁵⁹ The stockholders had forced Wemyss to increase the prices at the Walnut, a move which was not popular, and which necessitated Wemyss' closing the theatre in January.⁶⁰

Forrest played a return engagement in November and went through his usual round of characters. Mrs. Hunt supported him as Julie de Mortimer in Richelieu, Oceana (a new role for her) in Metamora, Ophelia in Hamlet, Albert in William Tell, Cordelia in King Lear, and Pauline in The Lady of Lyons.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Francis C. Wemyss, Twenty-Six Years of the Life of An Actor and Manager. Interspersed with Sketches, Anecdotes and Opinions of the Professional Merits of the Most Celebrated Actresses of our Day (New York: Burgess, Stringer and Co., 1847), II, 320.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Arthur Herman Wilson, A History of the Philadelphia Theatre 1835-1855 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935), pp. 12, 13, 15.

⁶¹ The Public Ledger, November 25-December 7, 1839.

Mrs. Hunt supported several other visiting stars during the winter season. She was Vittoria in Knights of the Golden Fleece, Harriet in Forest Rose, and Fanny in Jonathan in England during "Yankee" Hill's engagement.⁶² She also appeared in Forest Rose during "Yankee" Bowman's visit to the Walnut.⁶³ When Mrs. Sequin was featured in operas, Mrs. Hunt was Barberina in her production of The Marriage of Figaro.⁶⁴

The company, which included W. E. Burton, a popular comedian, and George Mossop, was responsible for furnishing much of the Walnut's entertainment. Mrs. Hunt's name frequently appeared in advertisements, and she must have been kept busy learning new roles.⁶⁵

⁶² Ibid., October 21-November 1, 1839.

⁶³ Ibid., January 22-25, 1840.

⁶⁴ Ibid., November 8, 11, 1839.

⁶⁵ September 16-1839-January 25, 1840, her name was noted in the following roles: Blanche (Blanche of Navarre), Ellen (The Freemason, or the Secret of the Lodge Room), Eugenia (Sweethearts and Wives), Bertha (Peter the Great), Countess Lovelaugh (Plots, or Love in all Disguises), Kaspar Hauser (Kaspar Hauser), Mme. Dupuis (The Secret), Louise Germeuil (Jacques Strop), Morgiana (Forty Thieves), Katharine Bittizen (Der Wachter), Julia (The Hunchback), Clara (Marmion, or the Battle of Flodden Field), Amy Robsart (Kenilworth, or the Golden Days of Queen Elizabeth), Therese (Therese), Gertrude (The Loan of a Lover), Lizette (A Swiss Cottage), Cora (Pizarro), Harriet (Is He Jealous?), Susan (Black Eyed Susan), and Sally Scraggs (Englishmen Abroad).

The theatre closed January 25,⁶⁶ Wemyss' fortunes having gone from bad to worse. By this time he had convinced the stockholders that the increase in prices had been a bad mistake, but it had been an expensive undertaking as far as his finances were concerned, and he never recovered from the losses he sustained this season. Even though the theatre was closed and prices restored to their old level, Wemyss found it impossible to win support for the remainder of the season. Wilson, in his study of the Philadelphia theatre, reported that in 115 nights Wemyss lost \$6,000, and that in the whole season of 261 nights, 155 produced less than half the amount of the nightly expenses to keep the doors open.⁶⁷

On February 3, the theatre reopened with a new production, Sadak and Kalasrade. Mrs. Hunt was Kalasrade in this play, which ran thirteen consecutive nights. It was withdrawn for one night and then performed for three additional nights. Mrs. Hunt appeared in some of the afterpieces that shared the bill with it, namely Jack Sheppard in the play of that name, and Ko-Ket in The Happy Man.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Ibid., January 25, 1840.

⁶⁷ Wilson, pp. 12, 13, 15.

⁶⁸ The Public Ledger, February 3-21, 1840.

Other new roles in which Mrs. Hunt appeared were Alice Gray in Alice Gray, or the Band of Crime, Mariette in The Death Token, Aline in The Hunters of the Pyrenees, Emily Smelt'em in Light Ship, and Victorine in Victorine. She also appeared in some pieces in which she had been seen earlier in the season and during other seasons.⁶⁹

Her husband, Henry Blaine Hunt, appeared in her benefit performance on March 11, playing Don Sylvia, a singing role in Brother and Sister, and Henry in The Handsome Husband. Mrs. Hunt was Isidora and Mrs. Wyndham in these two pieces and also played Kalasrade, which was revived for this occasion.⁷⁰

The season ended with the company playing a series of benefits for fire companies. Indeed, members of the stock company must have begun to wonder whether they were working for Wemyss or for a hose or engine company.⁷¹ Frequently the cast members were not mentioned in advertisements for these productions, and Mrs. Hunt's name was not found after May 16. It is not known whether she finished out the season which lasted until July 6.⁷²

⁶⁹ Ibid., September 16, 1839-May 16, 1840.

⁷⁰ Ibid., March 11, 1840.

⁷¹ See Wilson, p. 14, for the list of those benefited.

⁷² The Public Ledger, March 11-July 6, 1840.

Mrs. Hunt must have felt a keen disappointment in the season which had had such a promising beginning in September. However, even though the audiences were small, the actress gained valuable experience by playing a variety of roles in the different plays that Wemyss selected in his efforts to bring people into his house.

According to Wilson, the summer season at this house began a few days after the close of the regular season and lasted until August 25. Mrs. Hunt's name did not appear in cast lists for this period.⁷³

Wemyss moved to the Arch Street Theatre and opened that house on September 7 for the 1840-41 season, a very short one which lasted only two weeks. The veteran manager apparently found it impossible to compete with rival companies, and Mrs. Hunt and members of the company were unemployed early in the season. During the time that the theatre was open, Mrs. Hunt was Zabina in a new play called The Provost of Paris. Doubtless she played in many of the other plays offered but the record is incomplete.⁷⁴

Apparently Mrs. Hunt was not long without an engagement after the Arch Street Theatre closed, for her name appeared in a cast list in an advertisement at the Chestnut Street Theatre on October 3, in the role of

⁷³ Wilson, pp. 223-227.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 227-228. See also, pp. 15, 17.

Catherine in the play Love. James E. Murdoch, acting manager of the theatre played opposite her.⁷⁵

Tyrone Power, the great Irish comedian, appeared as a star, and Mrs. Hunt acted in all of his plays except two.⁷⁶ Her name appeared in advertisements in the following-named roles during Power's engagement: Isabella in The Irish Ambassador, Louisa Lovetrick in The Dead Shot, Mrs. Fitzgig in The Irish Lion, Nina in Born to Good Luck, Julia in His Last Legs, Harriet in Is He Jealous? the young widow in The Young Widow, Catherine in St. Patrick's Eve, Kathleen in Rory O'More, and Ko-Ket in The Happy Man. Not all of these were Irish plays, some of them being pieces presented by the regular company to round out an evening's entertainment.⁷⁷

Mr. and Mrs. Wood, opera singers, next came to the Chestnut, and during their stay, Mrs. Hunt sang in at least two of their productions. She was Liza in La Sonnambula and the fairy queen in Cinderella.⁷⁸

Fanny Ellsler, the famous dancer, was seen in a series of ballets, but there is no record that Mrs. Hunt

⁷⁵ The Public Ledger, October 3, 1840.

⁷⁶ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 85.

⁷⁷ The Public Ledger, October 5-24, 1840.

⁷⁸ Ibid., October 26-November 4, 1840.

danced in any of her pieces. She did, however, appear in several afterpieces presented with the ballets.⁷⁹

When Edwin Forrest was presented at the Chestnut, Mrs. Hunt played supporting roles and appeared also in several afterpieces.⁸⁰

The young actress turned to operatic roles again when Madame Lecompte and her company were the feature attractions. She was Lestelle Vanhelm in The Flying Dutchman, Druda in The Ice Witch and the Sun Spirit, and Zulicka in The Bride of Abydos.⁸¹

The Chestnut also seems to have suffered from financial difficulties and the theatre closed January 4. It reopened January 11 with the opera Norma which was listed in advertisements until February 4. After that time the theatre seems to have been open only for benefit performances and Mrs. Hunt's name did not appear in advertisements after January 4.⁸²

Mrs. Hunt appeared in many company productions during the short time that she was with the Chestnut Street Theatre in addition to those already mentioned. Some of them seem to have been new ones, although several

⁷⁹ Ibid., November 9-21, 1840.

⁸⁰ Ibid., November 23-December 2, 1840.

⁸¹ Ibid., December 3-18, 1840.

⁸² Ibid., December 18, 1840-January 31, 1841.

were roles she had played previously.⁸³ In many of these plays, Mrs. Hunt acted with Murdoch, who seemed to be the leading man as well as the acting manager.

According to Wilson, the company from the Chestnut took up quarters at the Arch Street Theatre during the month of April. Blake and Jones were the lessees.⁸⁴ Mrs. Hunt's name did not appear in advertisements until May 26. Then she began what must have been a starring engagement for the advertisement read: "first night of Mrs. Hunt and E. S. Conner."⁸⁵ The plays offered were The Lady of Lyons and Black Eyed Susan.⁸⁶

⁸³ The Public Ledger, October 3, 1840-March 31, 1841 and The National Gazette and Literary Register, October 3, 1840-June 30, 1841 note that she appeared as: Mrs. Bromley (Simpson & Co.), Lucille (Lucille), Mrs. Somerton (My Neighbor's Wife), Lucy Bertram (Guy Mannering), Pauline, (The Lady of Lyons), Christine (She Would Be a Soldier, or the Battle of the Chippewa), Sophia (The Happiest Day of My Life), Lady Elizabeth Freelove (A Day After the Wedding), Donna Victoria (A Bold Stroke for a Husband), Mrs. Major Mortar (The Ladies' Club), Widdow Wiggins (A Kiss in the Dark), Cecilia (Rural Felicity), Rosalie Somers (Town and Country), Angela (The Castle Spectre), Therese (Therese), Arabella Dashington (Hints for Husbands), and Lady Amaranth (Wild Oats).

⁸⁴ Wilson, p. 107.

⁸⁵ Edmon S. Conner (1809-1891), actor and theatre manager was a versatile player, although roles in melodramas seemed to have been his forte. His favorite parts were Claude Melnotte, Wallace, and Rob Roy. He married Charlotte Barnes who appeared with him at a later date.

⁸⁶ The National Gazette and Literary Register, May 26, 1841.

Edwin Forrest played at the Arch during June and Mrs. Hunt supported him in Richelieu, The Gladiator, and Metamora. She also played a new role, that of Marianne in Aymerle which ran eight days. During Forrest's engagement, the actress also played in several afterpieces.⁸⁷

Mrs. Hunt played a variety of roles in her capacity as visiting star.⁸⁸ She took her benefit on June 22, appearing in Ion. Her half sister, Miss Georgiana Kinlock, appeared in the role of Iris on this occasion.⁸⁹ Miss Kinlock and her younger sister, Adine, who had made their theatrical debuts at Natchez during their mother's engagement there in the 1839-40 season,⁹⁰ were members of the National Company this season.⁹¹ Mrs. Hunt's

⁸⁷ Ibid., June 7-22, 1841.

⁸⁸ Ibid., May 26-June 22, 1841. During this time her name appeared in the following roles: Juliet (Romeo and Juliet), Marian (Wallace), Violet (The Sea Captain), Kate Plowden (The Pilot of the German Ocean), Clara Douglas (Money), Rose (The Star Spangled Banner), Calanthe (Damon and Pythias), Virginia (Virginus), Theodore (LaFitte), Mrs. Bromley (Simpson & Co.), Lizette (The Swiss Cottage), and Mrs. Trictrac (The Married Rake).

⁸⁹ Ibid., June 22, 1841.

⁹⁰ Free, p. 413.

⁹¹ The advertisements this season referring to the appearances of the "Misses Kinlock" are the last references that this writer has found concerning Adine Kinlock. Her career seemed to end about this time.

husband was also a member of this company, having joined it after leaving the Arch. Mrs. Kinlock was also in Philadelphia and was a member of the stock company at the Walnut. Mrs. Hunt appeared at her mother's benefit on July 20, when Don Giovanni was presented.⁹²

Lewis T. Pratt took over the management of the Chestnut Street Theatre for the 1841-42 season and assembled a large company. Mrs. Hunt was engaged as "leading juvenile, tragedy, comedy, and singing." Peter Richings was acting manager and also played principal comedy roles. The theatre was scheduled to open August 26, but the opening was delayed two days because the scenery was not ready. Much Ado About Nothing and Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady were the plays selected as the opening plays. Mrs. Hunt was Beatrice in the first and the Duchess de Torreneuva in the second.⁹³

Fitzgerald Tasistro was the first visiting star of the season and received Mrs. Hunt's support in Hamlet and Othello. She was also Isoline to his John in a play called John D1 Prodicta, or the Bridals of Prodicta.⁹⁴

During Fanny Ellsler's engagement, Mrs. Hunt was listed in an advertisement in a dancing role in Le Dieu

⁹² Durang, IV, 187.

⁹³ The National Gazette and Literary Register, August 28, 1841.

⁹⁴ Ibid., August 31-September 9, 1841.

et La Bayadère, the ballet in which she had appeared with Madame Celeste at an earlier date. This time she was Ninka, and a professional dancer, Mlle. Desjardins, was in the role of Fatima. She may also have danced with the great Ellsler in other ballets at this time or at an earlier time when they shared the same program.⁹⁵

During the two months that the theatre managed to stay open, Mrs. Hunt was kept very busy. She appeared in several full-length plays and a number of short plays presented by the company.⁹⁶

One of the most interesting productions in which she appeared during the season was a dramatization of Charles Dickens' novel Barnaby Rudge. Mrs. Hunt played the title role in the Chestnut Street production and her good friend, Miss Alexina Fisher, played it at the National

⁹⁵ Ibid., September 10, 11, 13, 1841.

⁹⁶ The National Gazette and Literary Register, August 28-October 1, 1841, The National Gazette, October 4-28, 1841, and Theatrical Program, September 17, 1841, Program and Playbill Collection, Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia, note her appearances in the following: Christine of Sweden (Two Queens), Maria (No), Niece Hawk (Uncle John), Kitty (Shocking Events), Eliza (The Dumb Belle), Violante (A Wonder, A Woman Keeps a Secret), Kate Morgan (My Sister Kate), Ebra (Zembuca, or the Net Maker and His Wife), Lady Teazle (The School for Scandal), Cecile (The Secret), Julianna (The Honeymoon), Maria Darlington (A Roland for An Oliver), Clara (Money), and Katherine (Katherine and Petruchio). This may have been her first appearance as Lady Teazle, a role which was to become one of her favorites.

Theatre on the same night. It held the stage six nights in succession at the Chestnut, while at the National it ran two, then was withdrawn only to reappear once the following week. The National Gazette and Literary Register, which usually had little or nothing to say about dramatic offerings, made this comment about the Chestnut production:

At the Chesnut [sic] Barnaby Rudge has been well illustrated and performed. The dresses, groupings, etc., are copied from the picture of the tale itself, and are instantly recognized from their likeness. Mrs. Hunt as Barnaby acted in excellent style and looked idiotic in her character. . . . It is surely a curious proceeding to dramatize a tale before it is done issuing from the press.⁹⁷

This was only one of several dramatizations of Dickens' novels in which Mrs. Hunt played during her career as a stock and starring actress.

Lewis T. Pratt joined the list of theatre managers who had been unable to make a financial success of the operation of a Philadelphia theatre. He closed the theatre on October 28, but Mrs. Hunt apparently left the company some time after October 13, the last day that her name appeared in an advertisement.⁹⁸ According to her account:

During the latter part of the season the payments

⁹⁷ Ibid., October 6, 1841.

⁹⁸ Ibid., October 28, 1841.

became so infrequent that I was obliged to stop playing, and went to Pittsburg [sic] with Mr. Dinneford of the Walnut. Here we produced London Assurance with a degree of excellence unheard of in that vicinity--a fountain of real water, and entirely new carpet and furniture, mirrors, and new costumes.⁹⁹

Apparently the season at Pittsburgh was not a long one, for Dinneford and the company he recruited went on to Cincinnati, where Dinneford and Cornelius Logan became partners in the operation of the National Theatre. The first production was The School for Scandal. Mrs. Hunt was seen in the role of Lady Teazle, Hunt was Benjamin Backbite, Logan was Peter Teazle, and Miss Eliza Logan, who was later to become a star, was Mrs. Candour.¹⁰⁰

Because of a business depression, theatre managers in both the metropolitan areas and smaller cities found it difficult to operate at a profit. The engagement in Cincinnati seems not to have been remunerative, and the company went on to Louisville where, according to the actress, they were in "dire straits." In order to get them out of town, Mrs. Hunt played Richard III.¹⁰¹ Apparently the people of Louisville found a woman in a man's

⁹⁹ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 85.

¹⁰⁰ T. Allston Brown, Scrapbook, Rare Book Room, University of Pennsylvania Library, Vol. IV, p. 21, has an unidentified clipping giving this information.

¹⁰¹ Autobiographical Sketch, pp. 85-86.

role interesting enough to lure them to the theatre despite the depression. The record of any other engagements during the season is not complete.

The Hunts were at Shires Garden in Cincinnati for the opening of the 1842-43 season. Cornelius Logan was the acting manager of the company. The theatre opened October 1 with The Two Queens and Simpson & Co.¹⁰²

Mrs. Hunt must have rejoiced at being accepted at the Park Theatre in New York for an engagement in December. It would seem that such a position would offer greater security, but Edmund Simpson, the manager of the Park, had also had financial difficulties and had had to reduce prices at the beginning of the season. Nevertheless, despite the fact that he had a strong company, which included Mrs. Vernon and Mrs. Wheatley, excellent character actresses, and Placide, he found it necessary to close the theatre early in January.¹⁰³

On her first night, Mrs. Hunt played Lady Contest in The Wedding Day, and Blanche Heriot in a play called Blanche Heriot, or the Chertsey Curfew, both apparently

¹⁰² T. Allston Brown Scrapbook, Rare Book Collection, University of Pennsylvania, V. 211, contains an unidentified clipping which gives this data.

¹⁰³ Odell, IV, 603. See also, Autobiographical Sketch, p. 86. Apparently Mrs. Drew confused this season with a later one at the same theatre.

new roles.¹⁰⁴

She also was Mary Acorn in The Broken Heart in the premier performance of the play during her short engagement at the Park.¹⁰⁵ Simpson found it necessary to close the theatre in January, the last presentation consisting of four plays, Peter Ball, Bombastes Furioso, The Lawyer and his Victim, and The Pickwickians.¹⁰⁶

Mrs. Hunt was out of employment again, but she seems to have found a new position at the Bowery Theatre almost immediately.¹⁰⁷

At this theatre, Mrs. Hunt played ten acts of comedy and tragedy nightly for two weeks. On January 4, 1843, she opened as Julia in The Hunchback. She also played Maria Darlington in A Roland for an Oliver on the same evening. This was followed by appearances as Elvira in Pizarro, Clara in Money, and Pauline in The Lady of Lyons, and the feminine leading roles in Brian Boroihme, The Pilot, Venice Preserved, The Gamester, The Young Quaker, Richelieu, and Jane Shore.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Odell, IV, 603.

¹⁰⁵ Joseph N. Ireland, Records of the New York Stage, 1750-1860 (New York: T. H. Morrell, 1866-67), II, 388.

¹⁰⁶ Odell, IV, 613.

¹⁰⁷ Years later when Mrs. Drew wrote her Autobiographical Sketch, she apparently did not remember that the intermission at the Park came during her first season there and that she did not play Fortunio until the second season. See pp. 86-93.

¹⁰⁸ Odell, IV, 630.

A review in the Albion had this to say about the revivals at the Bowery:

Some of those magnificent spectacles and melodramas are in course of revival here, which were so eminently successful at this theatre a few years ago. Such, for instance, as "Rienzi," "Edward Maltravers," etc., the principal characters in each being performed by Mr. J. R. Scott who personates them in a very clever style, and who is well sustained by Mr. J. Wallack, Jun., Mrs. H. Hunt, and others of this effective company.¹⁰⁹

One of the pieces Mrs. Drew mentioned having played during this engagement was Beauty and the Beast. She played the leading feminine role and Wallack was the Beast. She said that the play was "quite successful."¹¹⁰

On March 13, legitimate drama was resumed at the Park Theatre, and Mrs. Hunt again joined the company along with Mrs. Vernon and Placide.¹¹¹ The first offering was a new Covent Garden comedy, Mothers and Daughters and a new farce called The Attic Story. A reviewer for the Albion outlined the plot of the story in detail, apparently to prove his contention that the play was a poor one. He spoke favorably about the acting, however. He termed the farce "execrably bad" and defied anyone "to make either head or tail of the affair."¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ The Albion, March 11, 1843.

¹¹⁰ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 93.

¹¹¹ Ireland, II, 388.

¹¹² The Albion, March 18, 1843.

Farquhar's comedy of The Recruiting Officer was revived on March 24, the first presentation in New York in sixteen years according to the bills. Mrs. Hunt played the role of Sylvia.¹¹³

Apparently Simpson continued to find it difficult to interest people in coming to the Park for the remainder of the season. The Albion reviewer attempted to analyze the situation and suggest a remedy for it:

We have never met with a greater dramatic puzzle than that of ascertaining why the Park Theatre continues to be so unsuccessful a speculation. It is not from the defectiveness of the establishment, for it numbers Mesdames Hunt, Vernon, Buloid, Knight, and other ladies, all very great favorites in comedy, also Messrs. Placide, Abbot [sic], Fisher, Andrews, Barry, Williams, Shaw and others, who have always been effective in their several parts. It is not in the scenery, stage furniture, and properties, for these were never in better condition at the Park than now. It is not in the band, which is sufficiently numerous and effective, nor in the prices, which are low, neither is it through the capricious desire for new faces in the establishment, for that does not operate at the Olympic; nor through the weather, for that is not a drawback at the other theatres. What, then, can be the cause of all this indifference to the once favorite "Old Drury?" The house opened with a perfectly new play and a new farce, and introduced between those pieces two rival dancers. All this could not fill the house! The next change was to the fine old comedy of "Wives as they were and Maids as they Are!" still the house did not fill. Again a change is made, and another new piece is produced, called "The Pretty Girls of Stilberg," which had been announced as in preparation before the Equestrian season occurred,---again, we have to lament it did not fill the house.

¹¹³ Ireland, II, 389.

The writer then went on to say that he suspected that the theatre had gone out of favor and suggested that it be closed, entirely refitted and embellished, and opened with an entirely new establishment. In conclusion, he reiterated the fact that the company was a good one and stated that he did not mean to disparage it.¹¹⁴

The Park, despite the report of small houses, finished out the season. On June 7, Mrs. Hunt was Josephine in C. A. Logan's drama, Yankee Land, which featured Dan Marble, a visiting star. This was the first production of the piece in New York.¹¹⁵

On June 15, Mrs. Hunt took her first benefit. According to a newspaper report, she had a very "respectable audience," meaning probably that it was relatively large.¹¹⁶ Mrs. Hunt's husband made his first appearance in New York in fourteen years on this occasion. Hunt played the leading role in John of Paris and Mrs. Hunt was Vincent. Apparently Hunt had not played in New York earlier in the season if Ireland's statement can be believed.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ The Albion, March 25, 1843.

¹¹⁵ Ireland, II, 391.

¹¹⁶ The Spirit of the Times, June 17, 1843.

¹¹⁷ Ireland, II, 391.

The Park closed during the summer and the actors were without employment during that period. Mrs. Hunt said later:

Some few of us went to Baltimore to play at the Front Street Theatre, but they did not want us there. Mr. E. N. Thayer, who was managing Peele's Museum for the owners, came to me and proposed that we should act there such pieces as required only three or four persons. In desperation we agreed. He was to have two shares, in virtue of his rig-out, the bills and managing. I was to have two shares, being leading lady; Mr. Hunt one and my mother one.¹¹⁸

This engagement reunited Mrs. Kinlock and her daughter for another series of performances. It is not known whether one or more of the Kinlock girls played there also. At least the older girl was there for Mrs. Hunt later mentioned her in connection with an incident which happened on the first night of the season:

The opening night I was dressing for "The Swiss Cottage" very dejectedly when my sister Georgia, who was looking through a hole in the green curtains, came in and said excitedly, "Oh, Louise, there are quite a number of people in, and one gentleman in full dress." After this I dressed with great alacrity, sustained by my sister's jumbled statements of the increasing audience. We acted with enthusiasm, and greatly pleased the company in "The Lecture Room."¹¹⁹

Apparently this engagement was financially satisfactory, for the actress wrote:

¹¹⁸ Autobiographical Sketch, pp. 86, 89. The actress said that she went to Baltimore at the close of her first season at the Park. Presumably it was at this time.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 89-90.

After the entertainment was over Mr. Thayer sat before a table on the stage with the receipts of the night before him, and solemnly handed each person his or her share or shares, in specie (and very welcome it was to all). This ceremony occurred nightly, and unlike most ceremonials, never became tiresome. We played for over four weeks with increasing attractiveness, and regretted being summoned to the reopening of the Park. There was some talk about not returning, but the Park was a power then!¹²⁰

Perhaps there was some prestige attached to playing at the Park even at this date, but it seems that an engagement there offered little sense of security.

However, before proceeding to the Park, Mrs. Hunt seems to have had time for a vaudeville engagement at Niblo's Garden. John Sefton, W. A. Vaché, and E. L. Davenport were other players in the organization that performed on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Ravels occupied the boards on the other nights of the week. The first program, on August 9, consisted of He's Not a Miss and The Blue Domino. Mrs. Hunt was Diana in the latter play. Ten days later she was Francois in Military Manoeuvres and four characters in Mlle. D'Angeville, a protean piece.¹²¹

Mrs. Hunt was Elizabeth in The Golden Farmer at Sefton's benefit on August 23. On the same evening, she was St. George in a farce called St. George and the Dragon.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 90.

¹²¹ Odell, IV, 693.

On Mrs. Hunt's night, September 2, she played Portia to the Shylock of H. P. Grattan, and was again seen as St. George.¹²²

The 1843-44 season at the Park Theatre opened September 11, with Pizarro as the main play of the evening, and My Aunt as the afterpiece. James W. Wallack and Mrs. Sloman played the leading roles in Pizarro, Mrs. Hunt was Cora, her husband a high priest, and her half-sister, Georgiana Kinlock, a Peruvian boy.¹²³ Apparently the opening program was well received, for a reviewer commented:

The theatre opened for the season on Monday last, under the most favourable auspices, being crowded in every part with an audience who testified their satisfaction by an almost continuous applause during the whole evening.¹²⁴

The same reviewer mentioned Mrs. Hunt's acting:

Mrs. Hunt rendered the delicate part of Cora very interesting; sic she looked the devoted wife and mother; had she appeared to feel the duties somewhat more, she would have left nothing to be desired.¹²⁵

During Wallack's engagement, Mrs. Hunt supported him in The Wonder, The Rent Day, The Brigand, and Town and Country.¹²⁶ In the last-named play, Mrs. Hunt was

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ The Albion, September 16, 1843.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Odell, V, pp. 1-2.

the brigand's wife, Maria Grazie. Following Wallack's benefit on September 22, at which time Pizarro was repeated and The Brigand introduced, the Albion reviewer had high praise for Wallack and said that the whole dramatis personae were in keeping. In a word to the "ladies of the Park" the same writer had the following to say to Mrs. Hunt:

Mrs. Hunt has certainly established herself as a favourite. Let her only eschew the artificial tones she is apt to occasionally indulge in, and allow her mental capabilities to have their full play, and she must be a decided favourite; she will acquire by the change we recommend feeling and expression without which no positive excellence can be attained in the histrionic art.¹²⁷

This was the second time that the New York writer mentioned a lack of "feeling" in Mrs. Hunt's work in serious roles, a criticism not found in press statements prior to this time. The same writer in a review of Hamlet some days later, said of her Ophelia: "If the latter lady [Mrs. Hunt] would avoid her chanting tones, she must become a valuable acquisition to any Theatre."¹²⁸ From his statements, it would seem that Mrs. Hunt may have followed an older style of acting still in existence in the theatre of that day. Later in the season, however, the reviewer felt that her acting had improved.

¹²⁷ The Albion, September 23, 1843.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

This season Mrs. Hunt had the unusual experience of supporting William Charles Macready, the famous English actor, in some of the roles which she had played with the eminent American actor, Edwin Forrest. Even at this early date the work of the two actors was being compared, and Simpson, the manager of the Park, was one of the theatrical managers who attempted to capitalize on the fact that the comparisons were probable, since the two played the same roles and were the leading tragedians of their respective countries. Shortly after Macready made his first appearance, Simpson brought Forrest to the Park for an engagement. Thus, theatre patrons were able to compare the acting of the two players. Such efforts on the part of managers, helped to foster the rivalry between the two players, which was to grow increasingly bitter as time went on.¹²⁹

Mrs. Hunt's first role with Macready seems to have been in *Richelieu*.¹³⁰ Macready had created the title

¹²⁹ People on both sides of the ocean took part in the controversy that resulted eventually in feelings of extreme nationalism. On May 10, 1849, in a wave of anti-British feeling, a mob stormed the Astor Place Opera House in an effort to prevent Macready from fulfilling an engagement in New York. There were riots outside and inside the house, and the militia called to quell the disturbance, fired into the mob, killing twenty-two and injuring countless others.

¹³⁰ Mrs. Hunt had played with Macready in England when she was a child actress.

role in England, but Forrest was identified with it in this country, and Mrs. Hunt had played the role with Forrest upon several occasions, including the spectacular Wemyss production previously mentioned. The Albion reviewer seemed better pleased with Mrs. Hunt's performance in this role:

We were much gratified with the part of Mrs. Hunt's Julie,--her first interview with the Cardinal we more particularly designate as excellent, it was natural and subdued--and afforded a pleasing contrast to her representation of Ophelia the previous evening. Mrs. Hunt is placed in a situation of peculiar interest this season, at the Park, and as her sincere friend and admirer, we would advise her to pursue a system of closer study, and a more thorough analysis of the parts she undertakes. We believe her capable of being all her friends desire.¹³¹

Acting with Macready was apparently not an easy assignment. The young actress wrote later:

Macready was a dreadful man to act with; you had the pleasant sensation of knowing that you were doing nothing that he wanted you to do, though following strictly his instructions. He would press you down with his hand on your head, and tell you in an undertone to stand up! Mr. Macready was a terribly nervous actor; any little thing which happened unexpectedly irritated him beyond endurance.¹³²

Of her Virginia in the production of Virginus featuring Macready, the Albion critic wrote:

We were much pleased with Mrs. Hunt's Virginia, bating occasionally her unfortunate propensity to whine. Many of her passages were given naturally

¹³¹ The Albion, October 7, 1843.

¹³² Autobiographical Sketch, pp. 94, 97.

and chaste; her appearance and acting during the trying conflict of the character were faithful and effective, and met with repeated testimonials of applause.¹³³

The same writer found her Pauline in The Lady of Lyons of interest:

Mrs. Hunt, in Pauline, really exceeded our expectations--in the last scene particularly, she drew forth repeated applause, by her touching and subdued acting of the heart-stricken wife.¹³⁴

He also mentioned her work in Othello and told how the murder scene was staged:

The murder scene was all we could desire, and the introduction of a new arrangement in the business by which Desdemona is smothered out of sight of the audience by drawing the curtain, was an evidence of the good taste as well as the sound judgment of the actor; it met with decided approbation of the audience.

Mrs. Hunt as Desdemona, did all her powers would permit. She is evidently improving rapidly. Her last scene was spirited and excellent.¹³⁵

The Albion reviewer thought that Mrs. Sloman and Mrs. Hunt as Gertrude and Ophelia respectively were "above mediocrity."¹³⁶

Mrs. Hunt also played in Macready's production of Macbeth. Her role was that of Hecate.¹³⁷ She was also

¹³³ The Albion, October 14, 1843.

¹³⁴ Ibid., October 21, 1843.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., September 30, 1843.

¹³⁷ Odell, V, 3. Autobiographical Sketch, pp. 97-98, relates an interesting note concerning Macready's appearance in this play.

Ida in Werner which featured the British actor.¹³⁸

After Macready departed, Wallack returned and played a round of characters. He repeated some of the plays presented in an earlier engagement, and it doubtless can be assumed that Mrs. Hunt again supported him.¹³⁹

Edwin Forrest followed Wallack, appearing, as had Macready, in Richelieu on his opening night. The Spirit of the Times reported "a scandalous attempt to 'get up a riot.'" The reporter said that it was generally understood that there would be a riot and few ladies were in the house. Forrest made a speech right after he came on in his second act costume, and was cheered by the audience who allowed the play to continue.¹⁴⁰ Forrest played Othello, Claude Melnotte, Hamlet, and Macbeth, all roles which Macready had played. He was also seen in King Lear, The Gladiator, and Metamora. No reviews were found of Forrest's productions, and so it is not known whether Mrs. Hunt played the same roles again; but it is assumed that she did since the same company supported all visiting stars.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ The Albion, October 7, 1843.

¹³⁹ Odell, V, 6-7.

¹⁴⁰ The Spirit of the Times, November 4, 1843.

¹⁴¹ Odell, V, 6-7.

When Macready returned for a second engagement, he brought Miss Charlotte Cushman with him to play the leading feminine role in Sheridan Knowles' adaptation of Beaumont and Fletcher's The Maid's Tragedy. In this production, called The Bridal, Macready was Milantius, Miss Cushman, Evadne, and Mrs. Hunt, Aspatia. In this production, the Albion reporter found that "Mrs. Hunt was interesting as Aspatia, and at times above mediocrity," but that the character "requires a delicacy of conception, and a skill in execution which the lady is unequal to."¹⁴² Macready was seen in Much Ado About Nothing with Miss Cushman in the role of Beatrice. He also presented Werner and Richelieu during this engagement.¹⁴³

James H. Hackett, American comedian, sometimes appeared on "off nights" during the engagement of other stars. He was Sir Pertinax in Macklin's comedy, The Man of the World, which was given on November 27 and repeated December 20 for Mrs. Hunt's benefit. Her role was that of Lady Rodolpha.¹⁴⁴

Mrs. Hunt also played in several plays featuring members of the company. She was Lady Gay Spanker in Boucicault's London Assurance on October 7 and 14.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² The Albion, December 9, 1843.

¹⁴³ Odell, V, 10.

¹⁴⁴ Ireland, II, 410.

¹⁴⁵ Odell, V, 5.

In Valmondi, or the Tomb of Terrors, which was a portion of the Christmas program along with the traditional George Barnwell /The London Merchant, she was Elvina.¹⁴⁶ She was Virginia in a new "petite comedy," The Lost Letter, which was frequently acted during the season after its initial presentation on December 4.¹⁴⁷ In a play identified only as Old Parr, Mrs. Hunt was Mildred Rockett. This was presented for Chippendale's benefit and featured him in the leading role.¹⁴⁸

The elder Booth appeared for a single performance of A New Way to Pay Old Debts on January 1.¹⁴⁹ Apparently Simpson found it unprofitable to keep the house open, for he closed it after Booth's appearance. Even though the Park had once been the most distinguished theatre in America, it seems to have lost its glory, or at any rate, its audiences. Not only had Simpson brought the best tragic actors of the English-speaking stage to his theatre, but he also attempted to arouse interest by presenting two famous violinists, Vieuxtemps and Ole Bull.¹⁵⁰ As

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

soon as the stars left the boards, the patrons seem to have felt disinclined to return to the house to see the stock company presentations. Mrs. Hunt and other company members must have been very unhappy at the second enforced vacation in the middle of what normally would have been a regular season. It is not known whether or not she had employment during the period that the theatre was closed this season.

The Park reopened March 6 with the company apparently intact. According to Odell, Simpson "began tearing a leaf from the books of the Bowery and the Chatham [rival theatres]--with a melodrama . . . The Bohemians in Paris, and in later weeks The Bohemians, or the Mysteries of Crime."

Mrs. Hunt was the "betrayed Louise" in the first play, which ran four consecutive performances. Doubtless she appeared in the second play also.¹⁵¹ A short time later another new melodrama, The Pride of Birth or, the Noble, the Gambler, the Thief, and the Barber was brought out, and ran almost a week, sharing a bill with a revival of The Flying Dutchman. Mrs. Hunt was Emeline in the first play. She appeared in the second, but her role is not known.¹⁵² The Albion noted, in connection with her performance, that the play

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 13.

afforded "situations for some exquisite acting by Mrs. Hunt, as the heroine, (who, by the way, is improving astonishingly,). . . ." ¹⁵³

Booth was the first star to appear after the theatre opened. He played his usual favorite roles. Mrs. Hunt was Anne in Richard III and probably was seen in other plays also. ¹⁵⁴ For his benefit following another engagement about a month later, Mrs. Hunt was Eliza in a revival of Riches, in which the veteran actor starred. ¹⁵⁵

Macready played a third engagement at the Park, beginning on May 13 with Hamlet. He also played Othello again during this appearance. Again Mrs. Hunt played Ophelia and Desdemona. ¹⁵⁶

Another famous actor to make appearances at the Park during the season was George Vandenhoff. Mrs. Hunt played Beatrice to his Benedict on June 4, and at a benefit given for Simpson near the end of the season, she appeared with him in the second act of The Lady of Lyons. ¹⁵⁷

Mrs. Hunt must have found it exciting to play with

¹⁵³ The Albion, March 23, 1844.

¹⁵⁴ Odell, V, 13.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 18.

such actors as Macready, Forrest, Cushman, Wallack, Booth, Hackett, and Vandenhoff all in the same season, despite the fact that the assignments must have been demanding. However, perhaps even more thrilling to the twenty-four-year-old actress was the individual success and recognition she received as a comedienne this season. Fortunately for Mrs. Hunt, Simpson, in order to revive a lagging interest in the once-famous Park theatre, brought out some new comedies, farces, and burlesques, and several of these pieces had roles peculiarly suited to her ability. She played some of these roles for several years. In fact, they became identified with her in this country.

A farce called Bamboozling was the first of the new plays in a lighter vein brought out at the Park. It shared a bill with Booth's presentation of Richard III. The Albion reviewer had a few words to say about it:

We have scarcely left ourselves space to notice the new farce of "Bamboozling," produced on Monday evening, with entire success. It is a humorous tissue of laughable equivocation, admirably sustained by Chippendale, Barry, and Mrs. Hunt in the true sterling vein. . . .¹⁵⁸

On April 16, Simpson presented, for the first time in this country, "an original absurdity of great wit and humor, by Planche, entitled 'Fortunio, and his Seven Gifted Servants,' produced with new scenery, dresses, &c.,

¹⁵⁸ The Albion, March 16, 1844.

and proving an extraordinary success." The historian, who reported the preceding, also wrote that: "Mrs. Hunt displayed unsuspected ability in the ease, spirit and humor with which she went through her part, and by universal acclamation was awarded the highest rank among actresses of burletta and musical extravaganza."¹⁵⁹

The Albion gave the following description of the piece:

Mr. Simpson has transferred from the Boards of the Old Drury one of the most successful pieces produced last season, under Macready's management, which bids fair to be even more successful here. It is a kind of travestie [sic] of the old nursery tale of Fortunio and his seven gifted servants dramatized by the English Scribe Planché; who has contrived to produce from the delightful tale which entranced our youthful days, an entertainment equally fascinating to 'children of a larger growth.' The original incidents of this story are all faithfully rendered, dished up with a spice of wit, fun and extravaganza, that is exquisite of its kind. Parodies from Norma, Masaniello, Gustavas, the Barber of Seville, Midas and popular airs, form the vocal accompaniments of the piece, and altogether form a melange of whim and extravagance that we predict will make this a standing dish, through the remainder of the season.

The reviewer said that Mrs. Hunt "as the disguised hero, Fortunio, was the very beau-ideal of the gay chevalier."¹⁶⁰

The Spirit of the Times commented upon Mrs. Hunt's versatile talent and said that she had shown herself to be an actress of "more merit than even her friends

¹⁵⁹ Ireland, II, 413. Hunt and Georgiana Kinlock who were also members of the company, had small roles.

¹⁶⁰ The Albion, April 20, 1844.

hitherto have given her credit for." This newspaper reported that on the opening night "the house honored her with the strongest mark of approbation . . . that of calling her forth, at the termination of the piece."¹⁶¹ Odell wrote that Fortunio "was a banner production for the house, and a feather in the cap of the delightful Mrs. Hunt."¹⁶² The piece was given repeatedly during the season and Fortunio was one of Mrs. Hunt's most successful roles for many years.

Perhaps encouraged by the success of Fortunio, Simpson brought out Planche's The Fair One With the Golden Locks the following month. Of it, the Albion reviewer wrote:

. . . It is, indeed, what the play-bills designate it, a Drama "full of mirth and merry conceit." We do not think it quite equal to Fortunio in its telling hits, or in the finish and wit of the dialogue--but it abounds with genuine strokes of humor--and is interspersed with some delightful music. The parodies on favorite scenes /Sic/ from Shakespeare are richly absurd, and, on the whole, if not quite equal to Fortunio, it is in every way worthy of ranking as only second to that popular extravaganza. The characters exerted themselves to the utmost to ensure the success of the piece, and it was received with reiterated expressions of applause.

The reviewer went on to praise the acting of several of the performers, namely Chippendale, Mrs. Knight, and Mrs. Hunt. Of the latter he wrote:

¹⁶¹ The Spirit of the Times, April 27, 1844.

¹⁶² Odell, V, 14.

. . . But the palm of excellence, we predict, will be awarded to Mrs. Hunt, or perhaps be divided between her and Mrs. Knight. The Graceful, of the former lady, is more than equal to her Fortunio--she looked perfectly fascinating in her extremely elegant Greek costume, and gave the point of the dialogue with an archness quite irresistible--one of her songs, a parody on "Lucy Long," was charmingly given, and called forth rapturous applause. . . .¹⁶³

Ireland said that Planche's second extravaganza "almost equalled in favor its forerunner, 'Fortunio.'" He said that: "Nothing could exceed the grace, vivacity, and abandon of Mrs. Hunt's performance of the Greek minstrel, which was received with every demonstration of pleasure and applause. . . ."¹⁶⁴

Another entertainment which met with success earlier in the season was a revival of The Spirit of the Fountain, or The Eve of St. Mark. Mrs. Hunt was Leoline in this novelty presentation.¹⁶⁵ Late in the season it, Fortunio, and Bamboozling were combined in what must have been an interesting evening's diversion.¹⁶⁶

For Chippendale's benefit on June 21, the once popular operetta, Ranz des Vaches, was brought back, after a long absence from the stage. Mrs. Hunt sang Clara

¹⁶³ The Albion, June 1, 1844.

¹⁶⁴ Ireland, II, 414.

¹⁶⁵ Odell, V, 12. This piece shared a bill with The Bohemians in Paris when it was first presented.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 15.

Fisher's old part of Mme. Germance. The evening was announced as the twenty-fourth night of Fortunio, and the tenth of The Fair One with the Golden Locks. It was, indeed, as Odell put it, "a Hunt night."¹⁶⁷

Another novelty presentation in which Mrs. Hunt had a prominent role was The Devil's in It, a drama taken by Wilkes from one of Scribe's operas; and according to Ireland, almost identical with Asmodeus.¹⁶⁸ Of it, the Albion reviewer wrote:

An agreeable novelty has been produced during the week under the somewhat equivocal name of "The Devil's in It."--but which proved, however, anything but what its title imports. It is a free translation of a popular Opera of the fertile Scribe, and is, altogether, a very pleasant and piquant trifle--a young Student full of German horrors and mysticism, is very agreeably played upon by a frolicsome young minstrel, Rollo--(delightfully played by Mrs. Hunt) who assumes the character of Belphezor--and after enacting some witty pranks that lead to a series of amusing equivoques, resumes his original character, and brings about the denouements of the piece to the satisfaction of all parties. The weight of the piece is on Mrs. Hunt's shoulders, and admirably she sustains it.¹⁶⁹

This piece appeared late in the season and possibly did not have a chance to become as popular as some of the earlier presentations. However, Mrs. Hunt seems not to have retained the role in her repertoire as

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁶⁸ Ireland, II, 415.

¹⁶⁹ The Albion, June 22, 1844.

she did the ones of some of the other pieces.

In addition to Bamboozling, some other farces and comedies gave Mrs. Hunt an opportunity to exhibit her skill in the comedy line during the season. In fact, one of her "hits" during the season was in the role of Joseph, "my Grandmother's pet," in The Young Scamp. Ireland said she played the role to perfection.¹⁷⁰

Two other plays in a light vein, City Wives and City Husbands and The Wedding Breakfast gave Mrs. Hunt additional new comedy roles. In the first, Mrs. Hunt was Mrs. Easy in the production of the play which was given as an afterpiece to Othello on May 31.¹⁷¹ The second play was brought out a month earlier and Mrs. Hunt was seen in the role of Julia. Both pieces were called "comediettas."¹⁷²

Mrs. Hunt was seen in some revivals of sentimental comedies and tragedies other than those mentioned during the engagements of stars. In the first revival in twenty years of Mrs. Inchbald's comedy, Such Things Are, she was the female prisoner. The play was given two performances and then, according to Odell's belief, "sank peacefully

¹⁷⁰ Ireland, II, 414.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid., 413.

into a desuetude from which it has never since been roused."¹⁷³ She played Jane Shore on a bill that also revived Valmondi, a melodrama of recent production.¹⁷⁴ She was Yarico in Colman's Inkle and Yarico which was produced for the first time in fourteen years.¹⁷⁵ None of these appearances apparently added to Mrs. Hunt's reputation as an actress, unless one gives her credit for versatility.

Mrs. Hunt took her benefit on June 21, and apparently received a good response from the patrons of the Park.

The reviewer for the Albion, whose criticisms of Mrs. Hunt's acting have been referred to from time to time in the discussion of her work at the Park Theatre, commented upon her benefit in these words:

Park Theatre:--The season at this theatre is drawing to a close with the Benefits of the Stock actors. We were glad to see that the Public are disposed to patronize some of their favourites at this House; Mrs. Hunt received a very flattering testimonial to her talents in the shape of a full House and hearty applause--it was a just tribute to an estimable woman, and a clever actress. Her own inimitable Fortunio, and the Lady with the Golden Locks, with the Young Scamp, in which Mrs. Hunt is the beau ideal of Little Pickle,

¹⁷³ Odell, V, 13.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁷⁵ Ireland, II, 413.

were the entertainments, and we have seldom seen an audience more gratified--and the secret is simply this, that these pieces exhibit the talent of the Park Company to the best advantage; the leading Stock actors are exactly fitted, their peculiar capabilities precisely developed, and the consequence is complete satisfaction to an audience.¹⁷⁶

Apparently, then, the Albion reviewer, who had an opportunity to see her in a variety of roles, felt that she was better suited to roles in this line, a conclusion which the actress herself came to share. Perhaps she was already aware of it by this time, but the exigencies of the stock system being such as they were, she was compelled to play tragic and melodramatic heroines for a longer period of time. Versatility was important in a stock player, and Mrs. Hunt could play a variety of roles creditably and was called upon to do so during her career as a stock actress.

One would think that after Mrs. Hunt's apparent success, Simpson would have wished to keep her in the company another season. According to Odell, Simpson went to England to recruit a company, seemingly even at this date, 1844, not realizing that there were many talented players upon the American stage. Perhaps he hoped that an importation of foreign stars would again attract attention to his theatre. Odell also suggests that Mrs. Hunt

¹⁷⁶ The Albion, June 22, 1844.

was not retained because Simpson in the last days of his career simply could not keep his best players and perhaps could not afford to pay them what they were worth.¹⁷⁷

Whatever the reason, Mrs. Hunt left the Park at the end of the season.

During this season, Mrs. Hunt had become a well-known actress on the New York stage. Her husband, on the other hand, who was also a member of the company, faded farther into the background, occasionally playing bit parts in the pieces in which his wife was featured. This situation doubtless did not add to the personal happiness of either play, despite the fact that the season was a significant one professionally for the young actress.

¹⁷⁷ Odell, V, 19.

CHAPTER IV

LEADING LADY AND STAR (1844-1851)

After the Park Theatre engagement, Mrs. Hunt went to the Albany Museum for the summer. She said that her "heart sank" when she saw the place, but that "everything prospered there after this," and that she had "reason to look back upon the time spent in Albany with gratitude."¹

Mrs. Hunt seems to have been associated with the Albany Theatre from time to time during the next few seasons. While she was with the company, she seems to have acted as the leading lady.

Apparently she played in other cities, too, during the 1844-45 season. One theatre historian stated that Mrs. Hunt "whose espièglerie" had "turned the heads of more than one young man," had appeared in Boston under the auspices of Manager Pelby. He did not date the engagement except to indicate that it occurred after Macready's 1843 visit to that city.²

On November 6, Mrs. Hunt appeared at a benefit

¹ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 93.

² William W. Clapp, Jr. A Record of the Boston Stage (Boston: James Munroe and Co., 1853), p. 402.

performance at the Park Theatre, New York, honoring Mrs. Vernon, who was leaving the stage temporarily to go south for her health. The elder actress chose The Rivals for her farewell offering, since it gave her the opportunity to appear in a favorite role, that of Mrs. Malaprop.³ Clara Fisher Maeder was Lydia Languish at her sister's benefit. Mrs. Hunt was seen in the role of Graceful in The Fair One with the Golden Locks.⁴

Also in November, Mr. and Mrs. Hunt played a starring engagement in Baltimore at the Museum. Mrs. Owens, wife of the manager, who told of their appearances at this theatre, said that Mrs. Hunt's Widow Cheerly in The Soldier's Daughter, her Marian in The Windmill, and her Fortunio and "all that line of characters were wonderfully charming."⁵

Durang reported that "Mrs. Hunt from the Park Theatre, New York," made an appearance in Philadelphia during the season,⁶ but Wilson did not mention an appearance there until 1846.

³ Mrs. (Jane Fisher) Vernon, sister of Clara Fisher, was distinguished for her acting of old ladies roles. She received much praise for her portrayal of Mrs. Malaprop, and was considered one of the best delineators of that role in America.

⁴ Odell, V, 116.

⁵ Mrs. John E. Owens, Memories of the Professional and Social Life of John E. Owens (Baltimore: John Murphy and Co., 1892), p. 23.

⁶ Durang, V, 251, listed her as one of the players to appear at the Chestnut.

According to the Albany Argus, Mrs. Hunt was at the Albany Museum during the winter of 1846. Her name appeared in an advertisement for Satan in Paris.⁷ A benefit was announced for her for April 6, but the bill was not given.⁸ The "last nights of Mrs. Hunt's engagement" announcement began to appear in newspaper advertisements on April 29. She was given a farewell benefit on May 4, and Wives as They Were and Maids as They Are and The Widow's Victim were the two dramatic pieces offered. The program was completed with dances by Madame Celeste, who was currently dancing there.⁹ Hunt's benefit and last appearance was announced for May 28, when he appeared in Rob Roy.¹⁰ Mrs. Kinlock and Georgiana received benefits in March, and so apparently they were members of the company of the Museum.¹¹

Wilson noted that Mrs. Hunt played a five-day engagement at the Walnut in Philadelphia, opening on June 20. Plays listed by Wilson for the five days are: Lessons for Lovers, Campaign of the Rio Grande, Fashion, Wild Oats, Pocahontas, Douglas, Werner, and La Bayadère. He does not

⁷ The Albany Argus, January 6, 1846.

⁸ Ibid., April 4, 1846. (The newspaper issued on April 6 was missing from the Library of Congress file.)

⁹ Ibid., May 4, 1846.

¹⁰ Ibid., May 28, 1846.

¹¹ Ibid., March 5, 26, 1846.

indicate the roles she played, or whether she appeared in all of these pieces.¹²

On June 29, Mrs. Hunt returned to New York as a star in The Love Chase, and The Young Scamp. One local newspaper reported:

At the Park on Monday evening, Mrs. H. Hunt, one of the cleverest and most popular actresses of the day, opened in two of her favorite parts--Constance in "The Love Chase," and Joseph in "The Young Scamp." Her return to the boards on which she has won so much fame, was enthusiastically welcomed by a large audience, and she was called before the curtain at the close of the comedy.¹³

The Albion, which had sometimes criticized her acting of serious roles, but which had had nothing but praise for her comedy roles, announced that Mrs. Hunt, "so long the established favorite at the Park," was to appear.¹⁴

After the first appearance of Mrs. Hunt, the same newspaper writer commented:

The fascinating Mrs. Hunt has returned to the Park boards with all her former attractions, and, we may with great propriety add, with increased powers of execution and artistical finish. She has acquired a breadth and expression in her acting that actually place her but second to few now upon the Continent. During the week she has appeared in Constance in

¹² Wilson, p. 338. On p. 336, he gives her name in connection with Lessons for Lovers and Campaign of the Rio Grande. On p. 694, he lists five performances of this bill.

¹³ The Spirit of the Times, July 4, 1846.

¹⁴ The Albion, June 27, 1846.

the Love Chase, Francine in Grist to the Mill, Minnie in Somebody Else, and her unrivalled Fortunio, in all of which she has exhibited a freshness and abandon in her acting positively exhilarating. Indeed, the hearty, continuous applause that has accompanied this talented actress during the week, is the best evidence of her powers. We are glad to learn that she will form one of the permanent stock company next season. . . . The present revival is superlatively good--Mrs. Hunt's Fortunio is too well known, and too widely appreciated to need further commendation.¹⁵

Apparently during her time away from New York, Mrs. Hunt was able to perfect her comedy technique and was now able to put it to use so as to bring about the greatest effect.

Odell reported that she also played The Four Sisters and The Devil in Paris¹⁶ during the week. The first play was a protean piece while the second offered her a role known as the "mysterious stranger." She kept both plays in her repertoire for many years, along with The Love Chase, Somebody Else, and Fortunio. On July 9, she played Constance at E. L. Davenport's benefit at the Bowery Theatre.¹⁷ Also in July, Mrs. Hunt was in Philadelphia for a starring engagement at the Walnut. She opened July 20 as Donna Olivia in A Bold Stroke for a Husband. Also, during the engagement, she was Miss Hardcastle in She Stoops to Conquer.

¹⁵ Ibid., July 4, 1846.

¹⁶ This play was given later under the title Satan in Paris.

¹⁷ Odell, v 191.

Jessie Rural in Old Heads and Young Hearts, Fanny and Tom in The Eton Boy, Lady Gay Spanker in London Assurance, and the mysterious stranger in Satan in Paris.¹⁸

The Hunts were in New York again for the 1846-47 season, apparently the last season they were together in the same place.¹⁹ Mrs. Hunt was at the Park as the leading lady of the company, while Hunt had engagements of lesser importance at other theatres, a situation which might have caused people to think of him as Mrs. Hunt's husband rather than as Henry B. Hunt, singer. Mrs. Hunt's career in the theatre continued to move ahead, while his seems to have been at a standstill. Some ten years before, southern newspaper writers had commented that his voice was not all it should be, and it probably did not improve as he grew older. The disparity in position as far as their careers were concerned may have been one of the reasons why the Hunts decided

¹⁸ Durang, V, 264. Durang seemed to be of the opinion that Mrs. Hunt was Mrs. C. W. Hunt rather than Mrs. H. B. Hunt. One knows that he is referring to the subject of this study, for he mentioned the fact that she later married John Drew. Someone, apparently Westcott, who arranged Durang's articles into a scrapbook, made a marginal correction and inserted the correct Mrs. Hunt's name.

¹⁹ Hunt opened at Niblo's Garden in September, 1846 but that theatre burned before the month was out. His name appeared in advertisements for Palmo's Opera House in November, and in an advertisement for the Bowery Theatre in January.

to go separate ways after this season. Then, too, the twenty years' difference in their ages may have had something to do with the incompatibility which led to their separation and divorce.²⁰

Mrs. Hunt appeared first in King Lear in support of Edwin Forrest, who had just returned from an unsuccessful tour of Europe. The September 14 production at the Park indicated that he did not lack admirers in New York City:

The return of Mr. Forrest to his native country and his reappearance at the Park Theatre, has created quite a furor among Playgoers. He appeared on Monday in "Lear." The house despite the heat of the weather was crowded in every part by an audience as enthusiastic as ever welcomed an old favorite to the scenes of his first success. The cheering was most vociferous and long continued, and was renewed at every possible opportunity during the play. . . .

We are happy to see that Mr. Forrest has been ably supported by Mrs. Hunt, who has also returned to gratify the desire of many friends who have a high perception of her qualifications as a superior actress.²¹

²⁰ Lester Wallack, Memories of Fifty Years (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1889), p. 225, in a reprint of a playbill, lists Hunt in a production at the Broadway Theatre, September 21, 1847. On pp. 184-185, Wallack related an anecdote that had to do with Hunt's failure to be perfect in his lines. It seems that he even had difficulty when lines and cues were written in a newspaper which was one of his "props" in Money. One of his few lines, "Waiter, the snuff-box," was delivered "Waiter, the buff-snox." According to Brown, "Mrs. John Drew," p. 129, Hunt died in New York, February 11, 1854.

²¹ The Spirit of the Times, September 19, 1846.

The reviewer for the Albion did not approve of Mrs. Hunt's acting of the role of Cordelia and again criticized her severely for her acting in tragedy:

Mrs. Hunt has resumed her situation at the Park to lead the business. We regret being compelled to speak of her Cordelia in terms of disapprobation. She has unfortunately fallen again into the besetting sin that formerly we have had occasion to condemn. She is too stilted, too declamatory, and too whining in tragedy. She must correct these faults as speedily as possible. Her comedy is among the most delightful, naive, joyous and natural specimens of art now among us, and previous to quitting the Park she had acquired a highly respectable standing in tragedy. With Mrs. Hunt's genius and tact she can easily correct these defects that we unwillingly advert to.²²

During this engagement Forrest also appeared in Richelieu, The Gladiator, Damon and Pythias, and Metamora.²³ He was also scheduled for an appearance in Macbeth, but hoarseness made it necessary for him to cancel that performance. In a second engagement later in the season, he was seen in the same plays as well as Virginus and The Broker of Bogota.²⁴ In reviewing the last-named play, the Albion writer said:

We always regret seeing Mrs. Hunt in tragedy; her rare comic talents are so highly appreciated by audiences, that this very fact is a drawback to her efforts when she dons the buskin.²⁵

²² The Albion, September 19, 1846.

²³ Odell, V, 249.

²⁴ Ireland, II, 465.

²⁵ The Albion, April 3, 1847.

It is entirely possible that by this time Mrs. Hunt shared a common problem with all comedians who take over serious roles, that of having difficulty convincing the people who enjoy laughing at their antics that they can play a serious role. The actor becomes identified with the comic spirit rather than the tragic spirit and the perceiver finds it difficult to make an adjustment to the different kind of role. However, it is doubtless true that Mrs. Hunt was more adept at comedy than at tragedy which is probably the reason that season after season she played more and more roles in the comic vein until she gave up the other kind of role completely.

Forrest repeated Metamora, Damon and Pythias, and Richelieu, during his third engagement, and played, also, Lucius Junius Brutus, Richard III, Jack Cade, and Bird's prize play, Oralloosa.²⁶ Mrs. Hunt seems to have supported him in all three engagements.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean (Ellen Tree) played an engagement at the Park in October, their second of the season.²⁷ This popular couple appeared in The Jealous Wife, Two Gentlemen of Verona, and The Wife's Secret.²⁸ It is

²⁶ Odell, V, 264.

²⁷ Their first engagement was before Mrs. Hunt joined the company.

²⁸ Odell, V, 251.

not known whether Mrs. Hunt acted in the first play. Her name did not appear in a cast list for the second one, but it did appear in the third. Her role was that of Neville, a page. It seems to have suited her very well, for the Albion reviewer wrote that she "exactly fitted in the arch young trickster of a page." He said further: "She enters into all the pranks with true comic zest, and is loudly applauded throughout."²⁹ Apparently the Keans were well pleased with her interpretation of the role, for in a letter to Sol Smith in connection with casting problems for a production of the play under Smith's management, Kean mentioned the role of "a gay saucy page which was excellently well acted here by Mrs. Hunt."³⁰

The Keans returned in November and played in The Wife's Secret for four nights. Then they presented The Wonder, The Gamester, and King John. Mrs. Hunt may not have been in the casts of these last three plays. King John ran three weeks to indifferent houses.³¹

²⁹ The Albion, October 17, 1847.

³⁰ William G. B. Carson, ed. "Letters of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean Relating to their American Tours," Washington University Language and Literature Series (1945), XV, 68.

³¹ Odell, V, 256.

Anna Cora Mowatt³² and E. L. Davenport came to the Park on September 28 for an engagement, but it is not known whether Mrs. Hunt appeared with them. It is likely that she played only secondary roles or appeared only in afterpieces, since the visiting players played the leading roles.³³

The next important star to appear was James W. Wallack, who made his first appearance as Don Caesar de Bazan. He was supported by Mrs. Hunt in the role of Maritana. He was also seen in Ernestine, or Wrong at Last, and on his benefit night, in Pizarro.³⁴ In the play, Ernestine, Mrs. Hunt was Marie, "a young peasant, deliciously naive and comic."³⁵

Several players of minor importance also made appearances this season. James R. Anderson played the leading role in The King of the Commons with Mrs. Hunt's support. The Albion reporter was again not pleased with

³² Anna Cora Mowatt Ritchie (1819-1870) was an American actress and dramatist. Her play Fashion was the first successful social satire and comedy of manners of American native drama. Following the success of the play, Mrs. Mowatt went on the stage herself, making her debut at the Park Theatre in 1845. Some of her best roles were Juliet, Mrs. Haller, Lady Teazle, and the heroine of her own play.

³³ Odell, V, 250.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 262.

³⁵ The Albion, April 10, 1847.

the actress' interpretation of a serious role, for he wrote:

The author has made Madelaine a very lackadaisical sort of heroine and Mrs. Hunt does not by her acting elevate the character. This lady is so delightful in her comic delineations that we always regret to see her don the buskin.³⁶

Anderson also acted in The Lady of Lyons, The Elder Brother, Hamlet, and The Robbers.³⁷ The Albion critic felt that Mrs. Hunt was "severely tested in Amelia," and went on to say:

. . . but that the management very wisely puts her in farce parts, which amply redeem all the defects of her serious characters, we should almost regret the position this lady sustains at the Park this season.³⁸

Emma Wheatley Mason, a sister of William Wheatley, a member of the company during this season and during the 1843-44 engagement of Mrs. Hunt, appeared several times that season. She was supported by her brother and it is doubtful that Mrs. Hunt appeared in any of the plays in which Mrs. Mason took leading roles. Of course, it is possible that she played secondary roles or appeared in after-pieces.³⁹

³⁶ Ibid., October 24, 1846. Note that the last two lines are almost identical with his comment of April 3, 1847.

³⁷ Odell, V, 251.

³⁸ The Albion, October 31, 1846.

³⁹ Odell, V, 257, 266.

John Collins, an Irish comedian, came to the Park several times during the season. Mrs. Hunt was seen with him in the roles of Fanny in The Eton Boy, the Duke of Anjou in The Soldier of Fortune, and Lady Caroline Buster in Is She a Woman?⁴⁰ The Albion called her Duke of Anjou "charmingly effective."⁴¹

Les Danseuses Viennoises, forty-eight little girls, who toured the country in spectacular dance compositions, appeared several times during the season. The Park Company presented farces which completed the bills.⁴²

Mrs. Hunt appeared in several interesting stock company productions and benefit performances during the season. She repeated some old roles and played several new ones. The stock company, however, apparently did not command a good patronage by itself. The Albion writer remarked:

It is to be regretted that such actors as Barrett, Bass, Fisher, G. Andrews, Dyott, Barry, with Mesdames Hunt, Abbott, Knight, and the inimitable Mrs. Vernon, fail in creating the least interest with the public unless they are supporting some popular artist.⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid., 252, 258.

⁴¹ The Albion, November 7, 1846.

⁴² Odell, V, 256, 260.

⁴³ The Albion, May 15, 1847.

On another occasion, the same reviewer praised the stock company for its work in comedy:

The entertainments at the Park during the week have admitted of a display of the full comic strength of the company. Bass, Barrett, Fisher and Andrews, with the clever Mrs. Hunt and Mrs. Vernon have presented an array of rich comic talent it would be difficult to match in any one theatre in this country.⁴⁴

Mrs. Hunt was seen in her old roles in Fortunio, Somebody Else, and Grist to the Mill in addition to roles already mentioned.⁴⁵ She was said to have been "exceedingly naive and charming as Fanny Hardman in Look Before You Leap, or Wooing and Wedding." The Albion reporter said also, "It is one of her delicious bits of comic acting, for which she has acquired a well deserved reputation."⁴⁶ She acted Rose in a two-act comedy called Two Friends, that was presented during one of the engagements of the Viennoise Children.⁴⁷

A new drama, Wissmuth and Co., or, The Merchant and the Noble gave Mrs. Hunt the role of Matilde, a German baroness. The Albion critic said she was "not equal to the high tragic powers required in Matilde," although they considered this to be "one of her most successful tragic

⁴⁴ Ibid., March 6, 1847.

⁴⁵ Odell, V, 185, 251.

⁴⁶ The Albion, February 6, 1847.

⁴⁷ Odell, V, 260.

personations. She looked lovely, and at times, was strikingly pathetic."⁴⁸ After reading a review of the piece, one wonders if "high tragic powers" were actually required in this altered version of Franz Dingelstadt's play.

During the season Mrs. Hunt appeared in another Planche extravaganza. The first presentation of this piece, The Invisible Prince, or The Island of Tranquil Delights, was given on April 25. Mrs. Hunt had another serio-comic role of the same quality as Fortunio and Graceful. In this instance, the character was named Don Leander. This play seems not to have caused the same excitement as its predecessors.⁴⁹ However, Ireland listed Leander along with Fortunio and Graceful as being roles in which Mrs. Hunt "proved inimitable."⁵⁰

Mrs. Hunt was also Madeline Lester in W. T. Moncrieff's adaptation of Eugene Aram.⁵¹

Benefit performances at which she appeared include one for George Barrett at which time she played Lady Teazle. Barrett was Sir Peter Teazle, and Wallack was Charles.⁵²

⁴⁸ The Albion, April 17, 1847.

⁴⁹ Odell, V, 264.

⁵⁰ Ireland, II, 470.

⁵¹ Odell, V, 265.

⁵² Ibid.

A benefit was given for John Fisher, comic actor and brother of Clara Fisher Maeder, Amelia Fisher, and Mrs. Vernon, who joined the Park Company during the season. Mrs. Hunt appeared in The Invisible Prince and in Wild Oats. In the last-named play, she was Lady Amaranth, and Wallack, who joined the company for the benefit was Rover. The third play of the evening was Charles II.⁵³

At Mrs. Vernon's benefit on January 26, one of her pupils made her debut as Juliet. Mrs. Hunt supported the young actress, Mrs. Ada Stetson, in the role of Romeo. It seemingly was her only appearance in a male role during the season.⁵⁴

For her own benefit "Mrs. Hunt congregated a host of popular names, John Sefton, Charles Howard, Mlle. Dimier [the dancer], and Barney Williams, [the Irish comedian]. The Trumpeter's Daughter was presented for the first time at the Park on this occasion. Mrs. Hunt was Madelon, the vivandière. Sefton and F. S. Chanfrau, the latter a regular member of the company, joined forces in The Golden Farmer to complete the bill.⁵⁵

⁵³ Odell, V, 266. The benefit honored Fisher, who was in ill health. He died the following month.

⁵⁴ The Spirit of the Times, January 26, 1847, and Odell, V, 259.

⁵⁵ The Albion, June 5, 1847.

The regular season ended June 7 with The Road to Ruin and The Invisible Prince.⁵⁶

Mrs. Hunt continued to show an aptitude for comedy roles and added several new ones to her repertoire. As a leading lady in stock, however, she was required to act roles in the tragic vein also. Seemingly, she was not so successful in the latter, even though she continued to support actors of the calibre of Forrest and Wallack. The season as leading lady at the Park Theatre no doubt added to her prestige and helped to forward her career.

For the second time in her life, Mrs. Hunt was chosen to be a member of a company to open a new theatre. In the summer of 1847, after completing her engagement at the Park Theatre, she went to Chicago to appear at the new Rice Theatre in that city. Mrs. Hunt had acted under John B. Rice's management in 1846 at the Albany Museum.⁵⁷

At least two studies of the Chicago theatre examine the first three seasons of the Rice Theatre in some detail.

⁵⁶ Ireland, II, 471.

⁵⁷ The Albany Argus, January 6, 1846, named J. B. Rice the manager in the Albany Museum advertisement for that day and all succeeding days through April 27, 1846. On November 30, 1846, the first night of the winter season, J. B. Rice was again named as the manager.

From these two studies, one by Wilt,⁵⁸ and the other by Sherman,⁵⁹ the high points of Mrs. Hunt's appearances in Chicago have been selected for discussion.

According to Wilt, few reviews were printed of theatrical productions during the first season. In one, which appeared in the Democrat the day after the opening, it was stated that "Mrs. Hunt has made herself known last night and will never be forgotten."⁶⁰ The theatre opened June 28, Mrs. Hunt appearing in The Four Sisters. Dan Marble was featured in the afterpiece.⁶¹

After a production of The Stranger, in which Mrs. Hunt appeared in a serious role, that of Mrs. Haller, the Journal commented:

Another crowd at the theatre, and another audience delighted. Rice is winning the golden opinions of Chicago by his management. All of his appointments

⁵⁸ James N. Wilt, "The History of the Two Rice Theatres in Chicago from 1847-1857," Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1923. Wilt gives a list of all plays produced at these theatres.

⁵⁹ Robert L. Sherman, The Chicago Stage Its Records and Achievements (Chicago: R. L. Sherman, c. 1947). /Sherman does not always agree with Wilt as far as production dates are concerned./

⁶⁰ Wilt, p. 30.

⁶¹ J. H. McVicker, The Theatre: Its Early Days in Chicago. A Paper Read Before the Chicago Historical Society, Feb. 19, 1884 (Chicago: Knight and Leonard, 1884), p. 58. McVicker joined the Rice Theatre Company the second season. Later he was owner and manager of the McVicker Theatre in Chicago.

are orderly and in good taste. Mrs. Hunt as "Mrs. Haller" and Mr. Marble as "Sam Patch" both drew tears from the audience--the one from the plaintive sadness of the character of the role she assumed so well, and the other by the other extreme, caused by excessive laughter.⁶²

Apparently, then, the reviewer for the midwestern newspaper was better pleased by the actress' performance of a serious role than was the writer for the eastern newspaper previously quoted.

On the occasion of Marble's benefit, which took place on July 10, The Forest Rose, The Four Sisters, and Black-Eyed Susan were presented. According to Wilt, the Journal said of this performance:

As we anticipated, Marble's benefit was a glorious success. Mrs. Hunt is the same sprightly actress she was when she won golden opinions on the boards of the Park in New York. We especially admire the performance of this lady, because, no matter how much there may be, there is no evidence of mere artistic skill in her acting. Everything she does seems natural.⁶³

During the remainder of June and during the month of July, Mrs. Hunt played many roles which were already in her repertoire. She appeared in such plays as Perfection, The Youthful Queen, The Hunchback, The Love Chase, Jane Shore, The Soldier's Daughter, The Married Rake, Grist to the Mill, The Dumb Belle, Lucille, Ion, The Day After the

⁶² Wilt, pp. 32, 33.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 34.

Wedding, The Wife, and Somebody Else.⁶⁴ On July 26, she appeared in a role which had been a great favorite of Clara Fisher Maeder, that of Clari in John Howard Payne's Clari, or the Maid of Milan. The Journal praised her representation of the character:

Mrs. Hunt excelled herself last night. Nothing she has done here has been better. Her rendition of 'Home Sweet Home' was extremely beautiful.⁶⁵

Besides appearing in both comedy and serious roles during the early weeks of her engagement, she also played one man's role, that of Claude Melnotte to Mrs. Rice's Pauline. The occasion was Mrs. Hunt's benefit on July 28.⁶⁶

In August, James E. Murdoch played a starring engagement, and Mrs. Hunt supported him in Hamlet, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, Pizarro, and The Lady of Lyons. The Journal reported that Mrs. Hunt as Ophelia was "touchingly beautiful."⁶⁷

Seemingly Edmond S. Conner played a starring engagement also in August, but there are no extant papers to cover the period. One paper exists which has a record

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 32-39.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 39.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 41.

of his benefit performance, however. On that occasion he played Richelieu and Mrs. Hunt was again seen in the role of Julie de Mortimer.⁶⁸

Mrs. Hunt's final benefit performance took place on August 21, at which time the Journal urged: "Let the large number of people, who have enjoyed Mrs. Hunt's acting so much see to it that she gets a splendid benefit--which she deserves." Clari and The Spectre Bridegroom were the plays presented.⁶⁹ It is not known how long Mrs. Hunt remained with the company after her benefit night. She seems to have won favor during her first season in Chicago if we are to judge by the Journal's favorable reviews, and by the fact that she returned for subsequent engagements.

After the completion of her Chicago engagement, Mrs. Hunt went to St. Louis to appear at Ludlow and Smith's theatre in that city. According to Ludlow, her engagement, which began September 13, was extended to thirteen nights. He wrote:

This charming little actress opened with Knowles' comedy of "The Love Chase," concluding with the farce of "The Young Scamp;" in the former she enacted Constance, and in the latter, Joseph, the young scamp, and both characters were performed in a way

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 43.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

that few have been able to equal.⁷⁰

Plays in which she appeared during the St. Louis engagement were: Ion, As You Like It, The Devil in Paris, The Irish Widow, Somebody Else, A Bold Stroke for a Husband, The Young Scamp, The Four Sisters, Is She a Woman, Isabella, or the Fatal Marriage, Grist to the Mill, Perfection, The Eton Boy, The Youthful Days of Richelieu, Fortunio, The Love Chase, and The Lady of Lyons. Some of these plays were repeated. Fortunio, for example, was presented four times, and some of the others were played twice. According to Ludlow's account, she appeared in seventeen different plays during the thirteen days, and was seen in a total of twenty-six performances in that time.⁷¹ This is a remarkable record when one considers that many a modern actress feels that it is a hardship to perform one role on the road.

It is interesting to note that all but three of these plays afforded her an opportunity to play comedy roles. The only roles which might be designated as serious in the list of plays above are those of Ion, Pauline, and Isabella. Either Mrs. Hunt was engaged as a comedienne on this

⁷⁰ Noah M. Ludlow, Dramatic Life as I Found It. A Record of Personal Experience of Drama in the South and West (St. Louis: G. I. Jones and Co., 1880), p. 667.

⁷¹ Ibid.

occasion, or she felt that her greatest success as a star lay in this line.

Mrs. Hunt returned to Chicago on October 12 for another two weeks of appearances with the Rice company. Her engagements with this company were not always clearly defined. Sometimes she appeared to be the leading lady of the company, while at other times, her engagements seem to have been of a starring nature. This particular engagement might be considered in the latter category, since no other stars were presented during the period. Also her roles, which, for the most part, were peculiarly suited to her talents, were advertised. During this time she duplicated many of the same roles that she acted in St. Louis.⁷²

On the night of Mrs. Rice's benefit, Mrs. Hunt was Isabella in Tertessa, the Usurer, which received its first Chicago presentation. On the same night she also acted Mrs. Marchmont in Love's Disguises.⁷³

For her own benefit on October 23, Mrs. Hunt played in three light comedy roles in Follies of a Night, The Young Scamp, and Is She a Woman?⁷⁴

⁷² Wilt, pp. 51-59.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 52.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 53.

During this engagement, she appeared in at least fifteen different plays, and again there was to have been a preponderance of comedies.⁷⁵

Ludlow and Smith, theatre managers of the South and West, whom Louisa Hunt later described as "proverbially the closest pair in the profession," engaged her to appear at their New Orleans and Mobile theatres during the 1847-48 season at a salary of thirty-five dollars per week, which was a higher salary than they ever gave their regular leading lady, Mrs. George P. Farren.⁷⁶ W. H. Chippendale, with whom Mrs. Hunt had appeared during several seasons at the Park Theatre, was also engaged. Seemingly the two were added to the regular company especially to do work in comedy, for they appeared in little else during the season.

Mrs. Hunt's reputation as a comedienne preceded her to New Orleans, and a local newspaper heralded her first appearance with these words:

Mrs. Louisa Hunt.--This charming lady and talented actress arrived in town on Sunday and is stopping at the Verandah. Those who remember Mrs. Hunt when she was the bright particular star at the Park Theatre a few years since, will be delighted to learn that she is engaged at the St. Charles Theatre, and will appear early in the season. For versatility of

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 51-59.

⁷⁶ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 98. However, she does not mention having made appearances at Mobile.

talent, and a thorough finished dramatic education, she is not surpassed, if even approached by any lady in this country. In the lighter walks of comedy, in which she often appears, there is a spirit and ease in her personations not equalled by any lady this side of the Atlantic.⁷⁷

A few days later the same newspaper contained a comment on the actress' previous appearances in the city. The writer for this newspaper, the Daily Delta, incidentally, proved to be one of Mrs. Hunt's most ardent admirers, and was unstinting in his praise of her acting:

St. Charles Theatre.⁷⁸ In our paper of today will be found the announcement of the opening of this popular house. The company is of great excellence, and will be sure to please. Mrs. Hunt we remember a few years since as Miss Lane, one of the most charming and versatile actresses of the stage, and we cordially welcome her among us again.⁷⁹

Another daily newspaper called Mrs. Hunt and Chippendale "universal favorites," and its pre-season announcement stated:

St. Charles Theatre.--This house opens its doors this evening to the public for the first time this season. Besides the usual company Mrs. Hunt and Mr. Chippendale will appear. Mrs. Hunt is an actress who possesses talents of a versatile character; she is experienced in all stage business, and will, without doubt, win her way here, as she always has elsewhere,

⁷⁷ The Daily Delta, November 23, 1847.

⁷⁸ This was the second St. Charles Theatre, not the one in which Mrs. Hunt had appeared in 1835-36 and 1836-37.

⁷⁹ The Daily Delta, November 26, 1847.

to the admiration of all playgoers.⁸⁰

Doubtless these pre-season items were inspired by press releases for the purpose of publicizing the new season, although New Orleans newspapers had for some time devoted much space to notes on the theatre, reviews and the like. This season Mrs. Hunt received many favorable reviews from "the crescent city's" writers. In fact, she became quite a favorite as the reviews indicate.

The newspaper advertisements on the opening day read: "First Night of Mrs. HUNT, who is engaged for a limited number of Nights. . . First Night of Mr. CHIPPENDALE, who is also engaged for a limited period." The play selected for their first appearance was the comedy, The Soldier's Daughter. Mrs. Hunt was the Widow Cheerly.⁸¹ The advertisement also listed additional features to be offered on the opening night:

. . .After which, La Polka will be danced by Miss Fanny Deering and Mr. Everett, (his first appearance)
After which, the new Farce, called the Young Scamp, or My Grandmother's Pet. Joseph, (the Young Scamp,) Mrs. Hunt, (as originally performed by her in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, with

⁸⁰ The Daily Picayune, November 27, 1847.

⁸¹ Ibid. The advertisement stated that this was Mrs. Hunt's first appearance in New Orleans for seven years. This writer could find no evidence that Mrs. Hunt had been in New Orleans since she completed a season at the first St. Charles Theatre and played a short engagement at the American Theatre in May, 1837, ten years before.

great applause); Ben. Beauvoir, Mr. Hickmott; Arthur, Mr. Rynar; Mr. Mildew, Mr. Grierson; Mrs. Manly, Mrs. Russell; Mrs. Swansdown, Mrs. R. Russell; Eliza, Miss Meadows. . . . During the evening Three Grand Overtures by the Orchestra. Leader Sig. Gabici. . . . To conclude with the new Piece called the Lost Letter. Mr. Beau, Mr. Chippendale; Mr. Paul Ardent, Mr. Weston; Virginia, Mrs. R. Russell.

From the opening announcements and advertisements of the first night's performance, it would seem that if Chippendale and Mrs. Hunt were not considered visiting stars, they at least were featured members of the company when the theatre opened. As visiting feminine stars appeared, however, Mrs. Hunt took over secondary roles in full-length plays, if she appeared at all. On many occasions she and Chippendale appeared in farces or comedies which served as "curtain raisers," or in "afterpieces" to the major production which featured the star. The "limited number of Nights" mentioned in the advertisement stretched out to cover most of the season.

One newspaper, in reviewing the opening production, stated that the first night "went off with much gaiety and laughter," and that the Widow Cheerly of Mrs. Hunt "was given with immense spirit, and even more than her former vigor."⁸²

The Delta was particularly enthusiastic in its praise of Mrs. Hunt's playing:

⁸² Ibid., November 29, 1847.

Mrs. Hunt played the "Widow Cheerly," in a most pleasing manner. This lady is as a /sic/ stranger in the city,--seven years having elapsed since her preceding appearance here. Mrs. Hunt is vastly improved in her art, and in fine comedy, may claim rank among the first in this country. The high reputation this lady won for herself in New York, is only her just due. Her appearance is elegant--her action graceful to an extreme; her voice is far more powerful than one would expect judging from the delicacy of her form. In all things she was the "Widow Cheerly," ever betraying the careless heart of merriment and virtue, sweetly blended with all the delicacy and benevolence with which Cherry had so beautifully invested the character of his charming widow.

As the "Young Scamp," in the farce of that name, this lady displayed a degree of tenderness and feeling that we could scarcely believe she possessed, after witnessing her flood of merriment in the "Soldier's Daughter."⁸³

Mlle. Dimier, danseuse, seems to have been the first star of the season. It will be remembered that she volunteered to appear at one of Mrs. Hunt's benefits at the Park Theatre in New York. During the dancer's New Orleans engagement, ballet performances supplied the main part of the program, and Mrs. Hunt and Chippendale appeared in short plays. At Mlle. Dimier's "opening," Mrs. Hunt was seen in The Four Sisters and Sketches in India. Again Mrs. Hunt's acting exacted words of praise from the Delta:

On Sunday night⁸⁴ Mrs. Hunt made her second appearance in the Burletta of "The Four Sisters," and the comedy

⁸³ The Daily Delta, November 28, 1847.

⁸⁴ Apparently Mrs. Hunt had overcome her prejudice about playing on Sunday by this time.

of the "Englishmen in India" sustaining the part of "Caroline" in the first, and "Sally Scraggs" in the second piece. We never saw a better "Sally Scraggs." The character seems to have been made for Mrs. Hunt. So intimately did she identify herself with the giddy headed, good hearted "Sally" that the house--which was on this night crowded, was in a continual merry excitement. Her dance with "Tom Tape" was glorious--the lady, at the same time, and in the best of humors, inflicting a just rebuke upon the distributors of bouquets, by throwing, with the most provoking gravity, flowers at the feet of her invincible lover, "Augustus Port Arlington," alias "Tom Tape."⁸⁵

The throwing of bouquets continued in this theatre, however, and only a few days later, General Zachary Taylor, who was feted in New Orleans after a triumphal return from Mexico, tossed a bouquet to Mlle. Dimier from a box at the St. Charles Theatre. The French Dancer selected one from the shower which she had received on the stage and presented it to him.⁸⁶

On another evening during Mlle. Dimier's engagement, Grist to the Mill, and The Loan of a Lover were the dramatic offerings. The following day the comic extravaganzas, The Fair One With the Golden Locks, and Somebody Else shared the program with a pastoral ballet. The extravaganza proved to be the most popular piece presented by the guest comedians and was produced at least nine times during the season. The two played the same roles which had brought

⁸⁵ The Daily Delta, November 28, 1847.

⁸⁶ Ibid., December 3, 1847.

them praise in the New York production, namely those of King Lachromose and Graceful. Mrs. Hunt was in her old role of Minnie in the second play, Somebody Else.⁸⁷

The Delta reviewer was almost ecstatic in his praise of Mrs. Hunt's Graceful:

But what shall we say of that child of mirth, the charming little Mrs. Hunt? "Graceful" in character--by nature grace itself--allied to beauty--we scarcely know which to applaud most, her person, her acting, or her taste in dress. We never saw so good a "Graceful." She too, like Mr. Chippendale, surprised us by the neatness of her musical power. The part of "Graceful," like all her other characters she filled with that sparkling humor for which she is so justly celebrated.

And then

"Her eye (I'm very fond of handsome eyes)
Was large and dark, suppressing half its fire
Until she spoke, then, through its soft disguise,
Flash'd an expression more of pride than ire
And love than either."

The reviewer closed with the hope that "this musical comedietta will not be withdrawn, for surely, it is kind to make man doff the cares of life and laugh himself into the resolution that lifts himself even beyond the powers of adverse fortune."⁸⁸

In another part of the same issue of the newspaper in which the above review appeared, this item was noted:

St. Charles Theatre.--. . . Mrs. Hunt, whose youthful dramatic efforts are deeply impressed upon our earliest juvenile recollections, is a charming actress.

⁸⁷ Ibid., December 1, 1847.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Unlike most juvenile phenomena, she has improved since she has bloomed into full womanhood, and is now in light comedy, the most spirited and vivacious actress of the day. She will soon grow to be a great favorite with our theatregoers.⁸⁹

Reviews of The Fair One With the Golden Locks continued to be favorable. On December 2, Chippendale and Mrs. Hunt were said to "do the thing up brown. They do it to kill everyone who witnesses their performance with laughter."⁹⁰ Another reviewed said that the audience was convulsed with laughter at their acting.⁹¹

A later presentation of the piece brought forth this interesting account of the production:

St. Charles Theatre.--Last night, again the house was full of fair and fashionable. Mrs. Hunt and Mr. Chippendale delighted the house with the delightful burletta of the "Fair One With the Golden Locks;" and although the whole company seemed to be in fine spirits, things would go a little wrong; for instance, the maids and men of honor did not make their appearances in time in two scenes; and the man who favored us with a bass solo in the "Carp and Crow," was determined to sing most wretchedly out of tune; and to finish the disasters of the night, in the last scene, our charming Mrs. Hunt stumbled over some clumsy fellows on the O. P. side and nearly fell, and yet the piece was sustained with more spirit than usual.⁹²

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., December 3, 1847.

⁹¹ The Daily Picayune, December 3, 1847.

⁹² The Daily Delta, January 4, 1848.

Doubtless pleased with the reception given Planche's The Fair One With the Golden Locks, the managers of the St. Charles brought out Fortunio almost immediately.⁹³ Although it received good press notices, it did not achieve the success of the first production if we are to judge by the number of presentations during the season. Fortunio was given only four times. There are several possible explanations for the relatively few presentations. It may be that the piece was too similar to the first one, and the novelty may have been lost. Also, the first piece may have had a better production as far as mounting, costumes, and special effects were concerned. No mention was made by reviewers of the elaborate scenic devices which characterized the productions of Fortunio in other cities. It may be that they were missing from the New Orleans presentation, and the production as a result failed to gain the interest that had been effected in other places.

Satan in Paris was produced for the first time in New Orleans early in December.⁹⁴ Several times it shared a bill with Fortunio. On one occasion when the two pieces were featured, a newspaper pointed out that the audience would have "an opportunity of seeing the versatility of the

⁹³ Ibid., December 7, 1847.

⁹⁴ Ibid., December 5, 1847.

talent of the delightful Mrs. Hunt."⁹⁵ The two plays were announced for the last night of Chippendale and Mrs.

Hunt's engagement:

This evening will be performed the celebrated "Drama of Satan in Paris" [sic] which has been received with most enthusiastic applause. In consequence of the universal approbation bestowed on the splendid musical extravaganza, entitled "Fortunio," it will be repeated again this evening. The public, when aware that this is the last night of the engagement of that exquisite actress, Mrs. Hunt, and the inimitable actor, Mr. Chippendale, will not fail to fill the house this evening.⁹⁶

The same newspaper reported the next day that the attendance was good "despite the elements" and that "all who were present were satisfied, and to the very echo applauded the performances."⁹⁷ Another newspaper remarked later that Mrs. Hunt's characterizations in the two pieces were "perfect gems."⁹⁸

A benefit performance was scheduled for Mrs. Hunt the day after, and the newspapers again came to her support. The Daily Picayune noted:

This remarkably spirited and versatile actress takes a benefit this evening at the St. Charles Theatre, where she has been winning the applause of hosts of new friends since her first appearance. To-night

⁹⁵ Ibid., December 7, 1847.

⁹⁶ Ibid., December 10, 1847.

⁹⁷ Ibid., December 11, 1847.

⁹⁸ The New-Orleans Bee, December 13, 1847.

will afford the lovers of good humor and good acting the opportunity of seeing her in two of her very best characters, in the comedy of "A Bold Stroke for a Husband," and as Graceful in the witty burlesque of "The Fair One with the Golden Locks."⁹⁹

The Delta, as usual, was a bit more effusive in its expression of an opinion as far as Mrs. Hunt's ability was concerned:

This delightful actress takes her benefit tonight at the St. Charles. Need we bespeak for a full and brilliant house? It is not often that so fine an actress--one so full of life, spirit and versatility--appears before a New Orleans audience. Mrs. Hunt has retained all that juvenile freshness, expanded and improved by long culture and practice, which made her so immensely popular some years ago. She is even now in the bud of her beauty and talents, and bids fair long to be the charm and ornament of the stage. We hope--indeed we feel assured--she will have a bumper tonight.¹⁰⁰

Mrs. Hunt and Chippendale were to leave for Mobile immediately after their benefit performances, but Dan Marble, the next scheduled star, failed to arrive when he was expected, and a notice appeared to the effect that "the worthy managers of the St. Charles have reengaged the sprightly, brilliant, dashing Mrs. Hunt and that gay, volatile, truth-like actor, Mr. Chippendale, for one night longer."¹⁰¹ However, the one-night extension lengthened into an engagement of some weeks and the pair did not depart

⁹⁹ The Daily Picayune, December 12, 1847.

¹⁰⁰ The Daily Delta, December 12, 1847.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., December 14, 1847.

for Mobile until the middle of January. After Marble's arrival, they shared programs with him.

The New-Orleans Bee, which ran a series of articles entitled "The Drama," devoted the sixth of the series to Mrs. Hunt. Since it is of interest because of its description of her person as well as her acting ability, it is quoted in its entirety:

Who has not heard of Mrs. Meny¹⁰²--the delight of the London Stage? She was the idol of the visitors of Covent Garden during the years intervening between 1785--to 95--in which year, accompanied by her husband, she came over to this country, and formed one of that glorious company of "Old Drury," under the management of Reiznagle,--then of Warren and Wood, which gave tone and character to the American drama which will never be destroyed. In fact, although we have no Mrs. Meny by name on the stage at the present time, we have her prototype in the charming MRS. HUNT, now playing at the St. Charles. This was Mrs. Meny's portrait in 1805. "This lady's figure is rather of the undersize, but she is nevertheless elegant in her person, and graceful and easy in her action and deportment. Her voice is beautifully feminine, and extremely melodious, when exercised in what is termed in level speaking. Her countenance is agreeable, and features regular and expressive; happily so where the situation demands a smile. She speaks naturally, acts still more so, and lays her accent and emphasis with critical correctness. She is an excellent vocalist--full of life and spirit--loves her profession, and feels that she is its pride."

The writer of these numbers knew Mrs. Meny, (not by that name however)--and although, then in the "sear and yellow life," he can see the image of that once bright form, hear the melody of that voice, and call up that never to be forgotten smile, in the youthful and fascinating Mrs. Hunt--whose face is the Merry of

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the past as it is the expression of the present.¹⁰³

The allusion to "Mrs. Meny" of the past doubtless caused some confusion among the readers until a correction was made in the next article in the series:

ERRATTA--Under this head, at all times a shocking bad head to us, we wish to make the following correction. The sentence commencing thus, "Who has not heard of Mrs. Meny, etc. etc." should read, "Who has not heard of Mrs. Merry, etc. etc." The fault is our own, for we made the two "r's" to resemble an "n," hence the mistake. We have no doubt, our readers corrected the error, for we playfully used the word "merry" in its application to Mrs. Hunt.¹⁰⁴

Late in December the Viennoise Children came to the St. Charles and charmed audiences there as they had in other cities during their American tour. One or two dramatic pieces were added to each night's dance program, and Mrs. Hunt and Chippendale appeared in many of them. The Delta reported:

Mrs. Hunt and Mr. Chippendale although almost eclipsed by the novel beauty of the Viennoise Children, are yet most enthusiastically received by our community. Why should it not be so? There are not upon the stage, at this day, two more chaste performers of comedy.¹⁰⁵

The Miseries of Human Life, in which the two players seemed to score a huge success during this engagement, occasioned this comment after a production which shared a

¹⁰³ The New-Orleans Bee, December 22, 1847.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., December 24, 1847.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., December 31, 1847.

program with the young dancers:

Last night the house was filled with the lovers of grace and innocence and fun. We never knew, until last night, that Mr. Chippendale and our Mrs. Hunt possessed the power to awaken such bursts of peculiar laughter as we heard from the pit last night. There was a merry fat faced gentleman present who sent forth such peals of sepulchral laughter at the points made by "Margaret" and "Ally Croaker," that the house was constrained to double the strength of the applause at every overflow of the gentleman's mirth. Mrs. Hunt seems to improve on each new occasion; and while we look at her, we almost think we could be forever pleased within the light of her smiles; but then, as an ancient poet has said, he

"Who trusts himself to woman, or to waves
Should never hazard what he fears to lose."¹⁰⁶

Early in January, Mrs. Hunt appeared in two plays which had not previously been presented this season, the petite comedy, One Hour, or the Carnival Ball, in which she was Julia Dalton, and The Governor's Wife, in which she played the part of Letty Briggs. During this month, she also acted in another production of Sketches in India and received the only derogatory comment of the season as a result. It was in connection with her voice, and surprisingly enough, the comment came from the Delta:

Our ever charming Mrs. Hunt, as Sally Scraggs, gave us new evidence of that versatility of genius for which she is so justly celebrated. If this lady's voice were as pleasing as her person and performances, she would indeed be perfection in her peculiar sphere.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., January 15, 1848.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., January 5, 1848.

Apparently the newspapers did not receive notice of Mrs. Hunt's departure for Mobile until after she had gone. She played in Husband at Sight on January 15, but did not appear the following night. Her absence was reported by the Delta:

One circumstance tended to mar the perfection of last night's performance, that was the non appearance of Mrs. Hunt upon the stage. We have become so accustomed to her sweet merry face and faultless action, that her absence creates a blank in the amusements of the night. Is she ill? We hope not, for the St. Charles will have lost its brightest star when she ceases to shine upon the stage.¹⁰⁸

The theatre at Mobile reopened on January 19 with Mrs. Hunt and Chippendale in the company. Duggar has reported that she "got an enthusiastic curtain call at the close of the comedy The Eton Boy--a compliment never before paid in Mobile to any performer on opening night."¹⁰⁹

According to Duggar, except for about twelve days, Mrs. Hunt and Chippendale shared all leading business throughout the season which lasted until March 4.¹¹⁰ The Viennoise Children also visited Mobile, and the Delta reported that they, Mrs. Hunt, and Chippendale were, "as

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., January 17, 1848.

¹⁰⁹ Mary M. Duggar, "The Theatre in Mobile, 1822-1860." Unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Alabama, 1941, p. 155.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 155, 156.

well they might be, immensely popular in Mobile."¹¹¹

In February, Mrs. Hunt was given a benefit and appeared in Satan in Paris and The Youthful Queen,¹¹² after which she returned to New Orleans for several appearances.¹¹³

Mrs. Hunt played in a new farce just received from London in her return appearance in Mobile. This was called The Pride of Market and was said to have been successfully acted by Madame Vestris on the English stage.¹¹⁴

After Ludlow and Smith closed the dramatic season at Mobile, Mrs. Hunt and Chippendale again returned to New Orleans, and their return was duly heralded by the Delta:

Mrs. Hunt and Mr. Chippendale.--With more than ordinary feelings of satisfaction we welcome back to the stage of the St. Charles Theatre these two most capital artistes. During their absence from us they have been with our pleasant neighbors the Mobilians, where they have "won golden opinions from all sorts of people," and delighting the largest kind of audience by their most excellent acting. At the St. Charles there are now in rehearsal--a new and very

¹¹¹ The Daily Delta, January 30, 1848.

¹¹² Duggar, 156.

¹¹³ The Daily Delta, February 16, 1848. On the first date she appeared in The Four Sisters, Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady, and The Barrack Room. On the second date, she acted in Lucille and The Young Scamp. There is no record of other appearances during her absence from Mobile.

¹¹⁴ Duggar, p. 156.

amusing piece called the "Ladies' Club," and a new farce, just received from London, entitled "The Pride of the Market" in both of which Mrs. Hunt and Mr. Chippendale will appear.¹¹⁵

On their first night, Mrs. Hunt and Chippendale were seen in Simpson & Co., and The Alpine Maid, or the Swiss Swains, while the visiting star, General Tom Thumb, was seen in Bombastes Furioso, and Hop O' My Thumb, or the Seven League Boots.¹¹⁶

A few days later, New Orleanians had an opportunity to see The Pride of Market, and the Delta thought it "most admirably adapted to Mrs. Hunt's brilliant and lively style of acting." The writer did not resist another "puff" for his favorite, and added: "She is the best comic actress in the whole profession, and the best proof of the truth of our remark, is the very great success which has attended every one of her engagements." Satan in Paris shared the bill with the new play.¹¹⁷ The Delta reviewer was enthusiastic about both plays, and in writing the review of the last-named play, disclosed the suspense element in the plot by revealing the identity of the Mysterious Stranger. His review of the new play gave him another opportunity to praise Mrs. Hunt's acting:

¹¹⁵ The Daily Delta, March 8, 1848.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., March 10, 1848.

"The Pride of Market" is an exceedingly pretty affair, and shows Mrs. Hunt's inimitable humor and naivete to the best advantage. Better acting than hers never was seen in New Orleans; and, indeed, we doubt whether anywhere in this country, a higher treat of a kind was ever offered.

Mrs. Hunt has been pronounced by one of the most eminent tragedians who has ever appeared on the American boards, to be the best actress in her line in this country. The compliment, high as it is, is no more than just, and its truth will be acknowledged by all correct and refined taste.¹¹⁸

The same reviewer seemed, unlike the Albion writer, to enjoy Mrs. Hunt's work in serious roles as well as in comedy parts. Of her Lucille, he said

. . . None but a true woman, and most talented actress, could have played Lucille as she did last night, and moved the feelings of an audience, as she did in the deeply touching and eloquently given passages of Lucille.¹¹⁹

Mrs. Hunt's and Chippendale's names disappeared from advertisements from March 20 until April 1. It is not known whether they had another engagement during this period. Apparently they were not in Mobile, since the dramatic season closed in that city, according to Duggar, on March 4. At any event, if they appeared in short pieces during the time that Doctor Collyer's European Troupe of Model Artistes occupied the St. Charles stage, the fact was not indicated in the advertisements.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Ibid., March 12, 1848.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., March 17, 1848.

¹²⁰ Ibid., March 18-April 1, 1848.

On April 1, Julia Dean began a star engagement alternating nights with the Monplaisir Ballet Company. Mrs. Hunt appeared in at least two of her productions. She was Helen in The Hunchback, which starred Miss Dean in the role of Julia, and she was Romeo to Miss Dean's Juliet in Shakespeare's play. Mrs. Hunt also appeared in several short pieces.¹²¹

On the occasion of Mrs. Hunt's last benefit at the St. Charles, she again undertook a man's role. This time she played Claude Melnotte to Mrs. Coleman Pope's Pauline. Seemingly the assumption of a male role or two by an actress during a season was added proof of her versatility. In attempting to arouse support for the final benefit of Mrs. Hunt, the Delta reviewer again extolled Mrs. Hunt's virtues as a player:

We need not, however, enumerate the attractions offered on this night to induce those who have become familiar with the acting of Mrs. Hunt during the past season, to crowd the house at her benefit. Mrs. Hunt is most justly considered by all good judges to be one of the best, if she is not, indeed, without peer, in this country, as a comic actress--but it is not in this line alone that her whole excellence as an actress lies. On higher walks, where deep feelings are to be portrayed, the emotions of her magnificence tell strongly of her power--Her magnificent personation of Romeo on Saturday night was a glorious test of talent and grace. Her acting is always good, always correct, and in good taste, and generally most exquisitely beautiful. During the whole of this long season, except for two

¹²¹Ibid., April 1-22, 1848.

short engagements in Mobile, the audiences of the St. Charles have depended upon the excellent acting, and graceful figure, and sunny face of this lady for their principal entertainment, and we are sure that those who have enjoyed her acting so long will not allow any ordinary obstacle to prevent their taking this last opportunity of showing their appreciation of her high qualities, and the constancy with which she has labored to attain them.

We know that opportunity alone is wanted to induce an expression of grateful appreciation in which this brilliant actress and most charming and estimable woman is held among us in New Orleans.¹²²

Mrs. Hunt appeared twice more before leaving New Orleans. On April 27, she was seen in another serious role, that of Isabella in Isabella, or the Fatal Marriage, and Clarisse in The Barrack Room. The following day she appeared in Chippendale's benefit, at which three pieces were presented, Grist to the Mill, The Fair One With the Golden Locks, and The Two B'Hoys.¹²³

During the season in New Orleans and Mobile, Mrs. Hunt appeared in at least thirty-nine different plays.¹²⁴

¹²² Ibid., April 25, 1848

¹²³ Ibid., April 27, 28, 1848.

¹²⁴ The known roles this season in New Orleans and Mobile were in: The Soldier's Daughter, The Young Scamp, The Four Sisters, Sketches in India, Grist to the Mill, The Loan of a Lover, The Fair One With the Golden Locks, Somebody Else, Fortunio, Satan in Paris, The Married Rake, Old Heads and Young Hearts, The Youthful Days of Richelieu, The Will, Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady, The Irish Widow, The Miseries of Human Life, Lucille, Perfection, The Eton Boy, The Dead Shot, Is He Jealous, The Dumb Bell, Bamboozling, One Hour, The Governor's Wife, Husband at Sight, The Barrack Room, The Pride of Market, The Youthful Queen, The Swiss Swains, Simpson & Co., The Hunchback, Isabella, The Lady of Lyons, Romeo and Juliet, A Bold Stroke for a Husband, My Handsome Husband, and My Sister Kate.

Most of these roles were in comedies. Only four could be considered serious parts, and two of these were male roles. Even though she seems to have been hired as a comedienne, she played the serious roles, either at the request of the managers, or because she wished to keep her reputation for versatility. This was important because if she intended to continue as a stock player, particularly as a leading lady, this quality was important.

Her acting was praised, sometimes extravagantly, by the newspapers of the area. The New Orleans reviewers did not criticize her work in serious roles negatively, but in several instances spoke well of her efforts. It is interesting to note that in most instances, the serious roles tended more toward the pathetic than the tragic. She must have been able to execute these with some appeal, for even the Albion reviewer of an earlier season occasionally found her moving in this type of role.

The season with Ludlow and Smith seems definitely to have added to the young actress' reputation as a comedienne of some distinction.

Mrs. Hunt returned to Chicago in 1848 for the Rice Theatre's second season, making her first appearance on May 31. The Rice seems to have operated as a summer theatre during Mrs. Hunt's first two seasons with it. Wilt reported that Mrs. Hunt's position with the company this season seems to be "not quite that of either a member of the

company nor of a visiting star, although she was sometimes announced as a star." He classified her as a "temporary leading lady." Her first appearance of the season was in The Soldier's Daughter and Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady. Then she appeared in several plays which were popular during her previous engagements in Chicago, St. Louis, and New Orleans, and was also seen in The Jewess and Valentine and Orson. According to Wilt, few newspaper comments were made on Mrs. Hunt's acting during the season, the most important one appearing in the Journal on June 1. It stated:

Of course a crowd will greet Mrs. Hunt tonight in the popular program that is to be presented. Her acting in The Young Scamp is so true to life that it alone should fill the house.¹²⁵

Several stars made appearances during the season, the first of whom was Edwin Forrest. This popular American tragedian appeared in his usual round of characters, and as on previous occasions, Mrs. Hunt seems to have been his leading support. Doubtless she appeared in many of the afterpieces as well, for many of her favorite pieces were included in the programs during Forrest's stay at the Rice.¹²⁶

After Forrest's departure, Mrs. Hunt was again seen

¹²⁵ Wilt, p. 60.

¹²⁶ Ibid., pp. 67-68.

in some of her popular comedy pieces; she also played in Lucille and Douglas.¹²⁷

On June 25, having obtained a divorce from Henry B. Hunt, the actress married for the second time.¹²⁸ Her new husband was George Mossop, who had previously been married to Mrs. Eliza Kent Knight, an actress and singer of some distinction. One theatre historian has stated that Mossop's "chief distinction lay in the fact that though he stuttered terribly when off the stage, just as he went on, the impediment ceased."¹²⁹ It has also been reported that he was a "devoted bottle-man" and that he was strongly addicted to eating onions,¹³⁰ habits which would not endear an actor to other members of a company, and

¹²⁷ Wilt, p. 71. He noted that she was the chief attraction from June 24-29.

¹²⁸ Sherman, p. 136-37 noted: "Rice's popular leading lady, Mrs. Henry Hunt, now became the wife of George Mossop whom she married June 25 after a divorce here in Chicago, from her first husband, Henry Hunt." Wilt, p. 71, gave the same date for her marriage. The court records were burned during the great Chicago fire, and no official record for the divorce now exists.

¹²⁹ Moses, p. 174.

¹³⁰ Gene Fowler, Good Night, Sweet Prince, The Life and Times of John Barrymore (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1947), p. 10. Fowler said that the Mossop marriage only lasted five months. Barrymore, pp. 16, 17, repeated Fowler's comments on Mossop and also intimated that the marriage was of short duration. In reality, it lasted until Mossop's death, October 8, 1849.

certainly not habits which would have helped him to acquire two charming wives. Indeed, he must have had more to recommend him than these anecdotes indicate. Some years later a newspaper writer described him as a "light, trim-built young fellow" who was very ambitious and sought to excel as a singer in Irish comedy.¹³¹ The former Mrs. Hunt had known Mossop for some time, at least since their engagement together in Philadelphia in 1839. It is also possible that she played with him in Albany, for he seems to have been one of the players Rice brought with him from Albany.¹³² Mossop played supporting roles such as Laertes, Mercutio, Cassio, Edmund, and Wellborn, as well as leading roles in Irish pieces.

Mrs. Mossop supported the veteran tragedian Junius Brutus Booth during his first Chicago engagement.¹³³ She also supported James E. Murdoch during his appearances,¹³⁴ and when F. C. Wemyss and his adopted daughter Miss Catherine (Mahon) Wemyss appeared, Mrs. Mossop was Romeo to the young lady's Juliet.¹³⁵ Thus, the actress again took over

¹³¹ The Philadelphia Evening Telegraph, August 31, 1897.

¹³² According to the Albany Argus, December 24, 1846, Mossop was a member of the company at the Albany Museum while Rice was manager. He may also have been associated with this house when the Hunts were there earlier.

¹³³ Wilt, p. 81.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 78.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 77.

roles of a more serious nature for a time. During Charles Dibdin Pitt's engagement, she was Froth in a production of A New Way to Pay Old Debts, and Mrs. Maynard in The Cavalier of England in 1840.¹³⁶ During engagements of Barney Williams, Julia Dean, and the Sable Harmonists, Mrs. Mossop was seen in some of her comedy roles.¹³⁷

Mrs. Mossop took a benefit on September 21, at which time a variety of entertainment was presented. She appeared in the fourth act of three plays, The Merchant of Venice, The School for Scandal, and The Lady of Lyons, and the fifth act of The Hunchback.¹³⁸ The purpose of this program must have been to exhibit her versatility in a variety of roles. The Journal reported that she played the "several roles with finish and truth."¹³⁹

The season continued through November 25, and seemingly the Mossops were with the company most of the time until that date.¹⁴⁰ Mrs. Mossop was given another benefit

¹³⁶ Sherman, p. 140.

¹³⁷ Wilt, pp. 82, 83, 84.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 80.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 81.

¹⁴⁰ Wilt, p. 72, stated that Mrs. Mossop remained a few days after Yankee Hill came on June 30 to play an engagement. On p. 77, he noted her return to the company on August 6. On p. 78, he said that there was no mention of Mrs. Mossop during the engagement of Mr. and Mrs. E. S. Conner, August 29-September 11, and as her name usually appeared in advertisements when she was in the theatre, it was likely that she was absent.

on November 11, and The Jealous Wife and Raymond and Agnes were presented. The same bill was repeated November 22.¹⁴¹

After closing his Chicago theatre in November, Rice took his company to Milwaukee, and the Mossops went with him.¹⁴²

The company returned to Chicago and opened the third season on April 16, 1849. Mrs. Mossop was seen in three plays, A Day in Paris, The Widow's Victim, and The Eton Boy.¹⁴³ She acted as company leading lady for the first two weeks of the new season. Edwin Harris was the leading man, and Mossop appeared in some of the short plays.¹⁴⁴

Mrs. Mossop's name appeared in cast lists for Hamlet and The Wife during a short visit of Charles Mason to the Rice.¹⁴⁵

The Montplaisir Ballet Company followed Mason and remained a week. The usual short comedies and farces shared the programs with the ballet performances and both the Mossops were frequently seen. They remained with the

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 85.

¹⁴² Still, Bayard, Milwaukee, The History of a City (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1948), p. 206.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 90.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 88.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 91.

company until May 12, when they were given a benefit, and Agnes de Vere and St. Patrick's Eve were presented.

According to Wilt, the Journal spoke warmly of Mr. and Mrs. Mossop and ended the article with one of its favorite jokes: "They will be given their dessert--a current jam."¹⁴⁶

Mrs. Mossop played few new roles during her association with the Rice Theatre; most of them were revivals of pieces she had played elsewhere. Several of these plays were predominantly comedy roles, although she played a number of serious roles in the support of other players and a few of them apparently because she wished to be seen in them, or because Rice assigned them to her.¹⁴⁷

The Mossops went to Buffalo and then to Albany after their departure from Chicago.¹⁴⁸

Their first appearance in Albany appears to have been on July 16, when Mrs. Mossop was billed as Mrs. Mossop "late Mrs. H. Hunt." On this evening, which was announced

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 91-92.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 91. Wilt remarked: "Mrs. Mossop in attempting to play Lucretia Brogia [sic] and Evadne without the help of some well known leading man, seems to have been trying her ability as a tragic actress. It was many years later before she discovered her forte was in light comedy." Wilt offered no evidence that she did not succeed in her presentation of serious roles in Chicago. Also, it seems that Mrs. Mossop had, possibly several years prior to this time, already recognized the fact that comedy was her forte.

¹⁴⁸ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 101.

as their first, the plays given were Satan in Paris and His Last Legs.¹⁴⁹ Their names appeared in advertisements through July 30 when Mossop was given a benefit. Mrs. Mossop was seen in The Lady of Lyons on this occasion.¹⁵⁰ On August 14, advertisements announced the return of the couple for another engagement which apparently lasted through September 1.¹⁵¹ They seem to have absented themselves from the theatre until September 17, when another "First Night of Mr. and Mrs. Mossop" was announced. On this occasion, interestingly enough, Mrs. Mossop appeared as Romeo, and Clara Fisher Maeder was Juliet.¹⁵² It was not possible to tell from advertisements whether the Mossops joined the company as regular members, or whether this engagement was in the nature of a starring one. It was interrupted on October 8 by the sudden death of Mossop.¹⁵³ He had been ill only a few days, but was thought to be sufficiently recovered to act during the evening in the bill, which included Lucille and The Object of Interest.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹ Albany Evening Atlas, July 16, 1849.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., July 30, 1849.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., August 14-September 1, 1849.

¹⁵² Ibid., September 17, 1849.

¹⁵³ Ibid., October 9, 1849.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., October 8, 1849.

Mrs. Mossop stayed on at the Albany Museum after her husband's death, returning to the stage on October 26 in A Day in Paris.¹⁵⁵ In April she left Albany for a brief period to fulfill an engagement "at the East."¹⁵⁶ Possibly this was the one at the Providence Museum which Blake mentioned in his account of the Providence stage.¹⁵⁷ When Mrs. Mossop returned to Albany, the fact was noted in the Museum advertisement of April 30. Her name appeared in large print in later advertisements which may have indicated that she appeared as a star.

On May 6, John Drew, announced as "the celebrated Irish Comedian," began an engagement at the Museum. As far as this writer has been able to determine, this was Mrs. Mossop's first meeting with the actor who was to become her third husband. During Drew's engagement, Mrs. Mossop's name appeared in cast lists for Cousin Cherry,

¹⁵⁵ The Albany Evening Atlas, October 26-December 30, 1849, Albany Evening Journal, scattered issues, January, February, March, 1850, Albany Daily Register, April 9-30, 1850, indicate that Mrs. Mossop was in Albany, if not all of the time, at least much of it.

¹⁵⁶ The Daily State Register, April 16, 1850 advertisement announced a benefit and last appearance of Mrs. Mossop "prior to her departure to fulfil engagements at the East." The bill was Raffaile, Cousin Cherry, and Valentine and Orson.

¹⁵⁷ Charles Blake, An Historical Account of the Providence Stage (Providence: 1868), p. 225. Mrs. Mossop played a starring engagement at the Providence Museum some time during the season which opened September 1, 1849 and closed June 17, 1850.

The Rifle Brigade, The Irish Lion, The Robber's Wife, and The Object of Interest.¹⁵⁸

When another benefit and last appearance was announced for Mrs. Mossop, John Drew "kindly volunteered," according to the advertisement. Used Up was the play chosen, and Mrs. Mossop played Sir Charles Coldstream and Drew was John Ironbrace. The second play of the evening was Where There's a Will There's a Way, in which Mrs. Mossop played Donna Frandseo.¹⁵⁹ If Mrs. Mossop left Albany at this time, she did not stay away very long, for her name appeared in an advertisement early in June.¹⁶⁰

On July 27, the actress and the Irish comedian were married.¹⁶¹ The marriage was kept secret for some time, however, and the actress fulfilled some engagements contracted under her former name.¹⁶² This was the reason Mrs. Drew later advanced for not announcing the marriage immediately. Another reason for the secrecy may have been the fact that the conventional year of mourning had not passed since Mossop's death.

¹⁵⁸ The Albany Daily Register, May 2-13, 1850.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., May 25, 1850.

¹⁶⁰ Albany Evening Journal, June 28, 1850.

¹⁶¹ John Drew (September 3, 1827-May 21, 1862) was born in Dublin.

¹⁶² Autobiographical Sketch, p. 101.

Mrs. Mossop's name continued to appear in Albany Museum advertisements as late as November 14, but it is not known when she left the city.¹⁶³

She may have played a second engagement in Providence shortly after leaving Albany, for, according to Blake, Mrs. Mossop acted in that city again between September 2, 1850, and July 5, 1851.¹⁶⁴

In January, 1851, Mrs. Mossop played a five-night engagement at Conner's Theatre in Philadelphia. A handbill dated January 29, 1851, reveals that on that date she appeared in Satan in Paris and Where There's a Will There's a Way. Georgiana Kinlock must have been a member of the company at Conner's for her name appeared in both cast lists.¹⁶⁵

This is the last record this writer has been able to find of her appearance as Mrs. Mossop. Later in the year, she joined her husband in a series of engagements and began to make the name of Mrs. John Drew well known to the theatrical profession.

¹⁶³ [Albany] Semi-Weekly State Register, November 15, 1850.

¹⁶⁴ Blake, p. 255.

¹⁶⁵ Conner's Theatre Playbill, January 29, 1851, Pennsylvania Historical Society Collection of Programs and Playbills. This playbill indicates that the program was the third of a five-day engagement.

By 1851, the actress had added some new roles to her repertoire, although she continued to appear in some favorite comedy pieces and in some of the roles popular with starring actresses of the day.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ During her Albany engagements, 1849-51, Mrs. Mossop is known to have appeared as: Mrs. Delmaine (The Serious Family), Lady Ellen (The Lady of the Lake), Meg Merriles (Guy Mannering), Roxina (Alexander the Great), Hortense (A Wonderful Woman), Pauline (Delicate Ground), Pauline (Raffaile), Cousin Cherry (Cousin Cherry), Valentine (Valentine and Orson), Mrs. Masterson (The Rifle Brigade), Mrs. Fitzgig (Born to Good Luck), Rose Redland (The Robber's Wife), Fanny (An Object of Interest), Marian (The Windmill), Linda (The Sentinel), Mrs. Fervor (Advice to Husbands), Sir Charles Coldstream (Used Up), Donna Frandseo (Where There's a Will There's a Way), Evelyn, the male leading role (Money), Katherine (Katherine and Petruccio), Portia (The Merchant of Venice), Juliet (Romeo and Juliet), Mrs. Beverly (The Gamester), Oxiana (The Inconstant), Mrs. Haller (The Stranger), Margaret (Love's Sacrifice), Mrs. Trictrac (The Married Rake), Julia (The Hunchback), as well as her well-known roles in Follies of a Night, The School for Scandal, Perfection, The Eton Boy, Paint Heart Never Won Fair Lady, The Lady of Lyons, Satan in Paris, The Four Sisters, A Day in Paris, Agnes de Vere, Ion, A Bold Stroke for a Husband, The Young Scamp, Grist to the Mill, Fortunio, Lucille, The Barrack Room, My Sister Kate, and The Youthful Days of Richelieu.

CHAPTER V

LEADING LADY AND STAR (1851-1861)

Mr. and Mrs. John Drew opened an engagement at the second Rice Theatre on April 9, 1851. This is the first reference this writer has found to their appearances together as husband and wife. It is, however, entirely possible that they began taking engagements together a month or so before this date.

According to Wilt, the newspaper advertisements for the theatre referred to Mrs. Drew as a star, but Rice did not so list her in his accounts.¹ On the opening night, The Love Chase and Love and Charity were presented. Mrs. Drew was Constance in the first play and played three characters, Julia Armour, Phoebe Pap, and Louis Bertram in the second.² After the opening, the Journal commented: "Mrs. John Drew, or Mrs. Louisa Hunt, or Mrs. George Mossop, the name does not matter, returned to Chicago and found her old friends as warm in her support as ever. Mr. Drew bids fair to become a Chicago favorite."³

¹ Wilt, p. 139.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 141.

Several stars of minor importance made appearances while the Drev's were at the Rice, and Mrs. Drew played supporting roles. She played serious roles for the most part during the engagements of Henry Sedley, Charles D. Pitt and Andrew Jackson Neafie.⁴ The only roles which may have been new ones were Therese in The Advocate of Geneva and Cadijah in Mohammed in which she appeared with Neafie.

When no visiting stars were present, Mrs. Drew was featured in plays popular with starrng actresses. These included both comedies and serious plays.⁵ Drew was seen in some of his Irish plays, and the couple appeared together in a number of short, amusing plays.⁶

The Drevs took benefits in May, and Mrs. Drew's on the twenty-sixth of the month brought in receipts amounting to \$102.25.⁷ On that occasion, Mrs. Drew was Martha Gibbs in All That Glitters, Linda in The Sentinel, and Sally Scraggs in Sketches in India. Her husband's benefit was on

⁴ Ibid., pp. 142-145.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 139-145. These included The Wife, The Hunchback, Fazio, Agnes de Vere, The Honeymoon, Lucretia Borgia, The Lady of Lyons, Money, and The Jewess.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., p. 145. According to Rice's account books, receipts ranged from \$44.75 to \$205.00 when the Drevs were featured players at the Rice Theatre. The average receipts amounted to a little over \$80.00 per night exclusive of benefits.

May 31, when the receipts were \$108.00. Rory O'More and Miseries of Human Life were the plays. Mr. and Mrs. Drew left the Rice Theatre sometime before June 9, the date on which Mrs. Frary was added to the company to take over Mrs. Drew's position.⁸

After the Chicago engagement, the Drows went to Buffalo and Albany.⁹ Mrs. Drew may have played in these two cities during the summer season, but it is doubtful that she played during the fall season, for her first child, Louisa Eliza Drew, was born in Albany on December 7.¹⁰

In the summer of 1852, Mr. and Mrs. Drew went to Niblo's Garden in New York to act in small comedies on programs made up of dramatic pieces and dances. During part of the season the dramatic company and a company of French and Spanish dancers alternated nights with a French opera company. Included in the dramatic company besides the Drows, were Lester Wallack (who was billed as

⁸ Ibid., pp. 145, 146.

⁹ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 101.

¹⁰ Louisa Eliza Drew (December 7, 1851-May 17, 1889) was the only one of the three Drew children not to make a reputation on the stage. She married Charles Mendum, a theatre manager, who became Mrs. Drew's theatre manager. Their daughter, Miss Georgie Drew Mendum, appeared on the stage for a time. Mrs. Mendum's birthdate is taken from St. Stephen's Episcopal Church (Philadelphia) Register, 1823-1865, p. 310, and the date of her death from Record of Death, Office of the Secretary Division of Vital Statistics, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1889, Vol. 402, p. 166, No. 3847.

J. Lester Wallack at that time),¹¹ Joseph Jefferson, Mr. and Mrs. John Sefton, Mrs. Stephens, and Mrs. Vernon.

During this engagement Mrs. Drew's name appeared in advertisements for eighteen different plays. Some of them were given single performances, although most of them were repeated from one to four times. Sketches in India and A Day in Paris were the two most popular plays, for they were performed five times each.¹²

In August, 1852, the Dews joined James Quinlan's stock company at the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, and Drew made his first appearance in the Quaker City on August 28. Colley Cibber's She Would and She Would Not was the featured play with Drew as Trapanti, Mrs. John Drew as Hypolita, and Celia Logan as Flora.¹³

This was Mrs. Drew's first appearance as Hypolita, a role which she played successfully for some years. According to the actress' report: "Not one had ever acted

¹¹ Lester Wallack (1820-1888), actor-manager, who upon the death of J. W. Wallack, became manager of Wallack's Theatre, New York.

¹² The New York Times, June 14-August 24, 1852, notes Mrs. Drew's appearances in the following: Betsy Baker, Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady, Perfection, The Pollies of a Night, The Eton Boy, Sketches in India, Naval Engagements, A Roland for An Oliver, Valet de Sham, The Married Rake, The Dead Shot, A Day in Paris, London Assurance (Benefit, Rousset Sisters, Castle Garden), The Widow's Victim, Love and Charity, Ladies Beware, The Dumb Belle, Love and Charity, and The Four Sisters.

¹³ Durang, VI, 345.

in the play before or ever seen it presented. It was very successful."¹⁴ Durang stated that "Mrs. Drew as Hypolita was all elegance and arch vivacity." He went on to say that "Miss Celia Logan and Mrs. Drew made a pair of spruce chevaliers. To use a stage phrase, they were capital 'breeches figures. . . .'"¹⁵ The second play of the evening was The Miseries of Human Life.

Apparently Mrs. Drew returned to New York for several performances early the next month. She was at Niblo's on September 6 as Julia in The Hunchback, and on September 10, she played Volante in The Honeymoon. On both occasions she played with an actress named Miss Fitzpatrick.¹⁶

She was back at the Chestnut on September 18 to appear as Sally Scraggs in Sketches in India to her husband's Tom Tape. For the remainder of the time that she stayed with Quinlan's company, she played with her husband and other company members in a number of pieces, and played supporting roles to some of the visiting stars.

During the engagements of Madame Thillon's Opera Company, the company played on "off nights" and in short dramatic pieces which were given with the operas.¹⁷

¹⁴ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 105.

¹⁵ Durang, VI, 345.

¹⁶ The New York Times, September 6, 10, 1852.

¹⁷ The Public Ledger, September 1852 and January, 1853.

In her lifetime upon the stage, Mrs. Drew had the opportunity to share the stage with most of the great actors of the century. She also met some of the colorful personalities in the theatre, one of whom was the notorious Lola Montez.¹⁸ There is no record that Mrs. Drew shared the stage with the woman who was then the talk of two continents. She did, however, appear in at least one afterpiece that was presented with one of Miss Montez' offerings.¹⁹

A short time after appearing on the same program with Lola Montez, Mrs. Drew shared a bill with Donetti's Troop of Trained Animals, monkeys, dogs, and goats!²⁰ Both of these engagements must have excited a great deal of green-room talk.

As far as the actress' future career was concerned, the engagement of William Wheatley was possibly the most significant. Mrs. Drew had played with him in New York on

¹⁸ Lola Montez (1818?-1861), real name thought to have been Maria Dolores Eliza Rosanna Gilbert, made her debut as a Spanish dancer. She was never a great dancer but managed to become a favorite of Ludwig Carl Augustus, King of Bavaria. Eventually she was excluded from Bavaria but her reputation preceded her to this country where she achieved success of a kind from playing pieces based upon her experiences. She is said to have taught Lotta Crabtree to dance.

¹⁹ Chestnut Street Theatre Playbill, October 18, 1852, Pennsylvania Historical Society Collection of Programs and Playbills. Mrs. Hunt was Susan Sweetapple in An Alarming Sacrifice which was presented with Miss Montez' Charlotte Corday.

²⁰ Durang, VI, 349.

previous occasions. This engagement renewed their acquaintanceship, and introduced Wheatley to her husband, who was later to become associated with him in a successful theatrical venture. During Wheatley's engagement, Mrs. Drew played Beatrice to his Benedict and Drew was Dogberry in Much Ado About Nothing. She also supported Wheatley in Wild Oats, The Lady of Lyons, Money, and The Belle's Stratagem.²¹ She was to play these same roles with him many times in later years.

During John Brougham's²² engagement, she was Edith in Brougham's dramatization of Dombey and Son, and according to Durang, "her conception and execution of Edith was as graphic and true to the author's design as any artistic illustration could be."²³ She also appeared in a local burletta called A Row in Chesnut [sic] Street; or, Old Drury in an Uproar, in a character called Mrs. Buzzard, and was Rosabel in a production of Romance and Reality.²⁴

Mrs. Drew played supporting roles, also, for several other stars whose names have long since been forgotten,

²¹ Durang, VI, 349.

²² John Brougham (1810-1880), actor and playwright, wrote about seventy-five dramatic pieces and played a great variety of parts. He was best known for his adaptations of Dickens' novels, and for his burlesques, the most famous of which was probably Pocahontas.

²³ Durang, VI, 349-50.

²⁴ Ibid.

namely L. S. Thompson, Miss Kimberly, and J. S. Browne.²⁵

Shortly before the Drews left the Chestnut Street Theatre, Mrs. Drew appeared in a company production of The Merry Wives of Windsor. She was one of the "merry wives."²⁶ This seems to have been her first association with this comedy by Shakespeare.

Before the end of February the Drews left the Chestnut Street Theatre and joined the company at the Arch Street Theatre.²⁷ Durang stated that the lessee of the Arch, Thomas J. Hemphill, on January 15 "found it necessary to end the season for re-organization, and then recruit the company more effectively with stock talent, and to cast about for extra attraction." According to the historian, "gradually these desirable adjuncts were gained, and a most excellent stock company concentrated at this theatre." The new artists included the Drews, William Wheatley, John Delman, J. R. Scott, and Mrs. E. N. Thayer. Mr. and Mrs. Drew opened at the Arch in the same play in which they first appeared at the Chestnut earlier in the season, She Would and She Would Not.²⁸

²⁵ Ibid., VI, 349, and The Public Ledger, December 22, 1852.

²⁶ The Public Ledger, January 27-February 1, 1853.

²⁷ Ibid., February 21, 1853.

²⁸ Durang, VI, 375.

The arrangement at the Arch Street seems to have been more advantageous to the Drews than the previous one at the rival Chestnut Street Theatre. This house was operated as a stock company without visiting stars. Mrs. Drew, as leading lady, was able to play a variety of roles, and Drew was able to present more of his Irish character pieces.

A week after the Drews made their first appearance at the Arch, a newspaper reported that they had made an "immense hit" and that the house had been filled every evening.²⁹ After the middle of March, when Wheatley became the acting manager, the players were advertised as the "Star Company." According to Durang, the "'Star Company' had turned the receding tide of public favor toward the doors of the theatre, and 'order reigned again in Warsaw.'"³⁰ From time to time during the season, brief newspaper items attested to the fact that the Arch was gaining the patronage of Philadelphia.³¹

Throughout the season, the emphasis at the Arch was on the production of comedies, although some of the "dramas" popular at that time were presented and a very few tragedies

²⁹ The Public Ledger, February 28, 1853.

³⁰ Durang, VI, 377.

³¹ The Public Ledger, March 2, 16, 21, June 6, 1853.

seen. There seems to have been a great deal of variety in the comedy line, however, as farces, burlesques, sentimental comedies, and high comedies were Conquer, A New Way to Pay Old Debts, Rule a Wife and Have a Wife, Much Ado About Nothing, and As You Like It were on the bills during this season.³² They supplied Mrs. Drew with only a few of the more than sixty different roles that she played at the Chestnut and Arch Street Theatres that season.³³

When the theatre closed for the season, Thomas J.

³² Ibid., February 21-June 11, 1853.

³³ The Public Ledger, September 18, 1853-June 11, 1854 and/or Durang, VI, 377 note that she appeared in the following-named roles: Lady Amaranth (Wild Oats), Norah Karrigan (The Irish American), Emily (Laugh When You Can), Ema (William Tell), Letitia Hardy (The Belle's Stratagem), Susan (An Alarming Sacrifice), Emily (The Poor Gentleman), Caroline (Two of the B'Hoys), Jessie (Gilderoy), Giralda (Giralda), Pennie McLoughlin (Presumptive Evidence), Lady Caroline Braymore (John Bull), Fanny Gribbles (An Object of Interest), Duchess de Fronsac (Husband of My Heart), Lady Helen (Wallace, the Hero of Scotland), Tellie Doe (Nick of the Woods), Mrs. Younghusband (Married Life), Amy (The Harvest Home) and Estafania (Rule a Wife and Have a Wife), as well as those already mentioned. She also acted in: The Robber's Wife, Delicate Ground, Satan in Paris, The Married Rake, The Lady of the Lake, Cousin Cherry, Rory O'More, A Thumping Legacy, Ion, Agnes de Vere, Born to Good Luck, Valet de Sham, Isabella, Sea and Land, Don Caesar de Bazan, The Wife, St. Patrick's Eve, The Serious Family, Jack Sheppard, Love, A Bold Stroke for a Husband, Jonathan Bradford, Perfection, The Dumb Belle, The Willow Copse, The Road to Ruin, The Irish Lion, The Rough Diamond, Old Heads and Young Hearts, Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady, Damon and Pythias, Follies of a Night, Charles II, London Assurance, Pizzaro, The Wonder, The Weathercock, A Roland for An Oliver, Macbeth, Love's Sacrifice, The School of Reform, The Maid of Croissey, The Good for Nothing, Tender Precautions, The Swiss Swains.

Hemphill advertised the theatre properties, furniture, costumes, stoves, carpets, and theatrical library for sale.³⁴ William Wheatley and John Drew acquired these adjuncts to the theatre as well as the lease to the house. The theatre was renovated during the summer in preparation for the next season.³⁵

The Arch Street Theatre opened for the 1853-54 season on August 20 under the joint management of William Wheatley and John Drew. Both men continued to act in the company during the season, but Mrs. Drew did not appear until after the middle of December. A son, who was to become one of the best-known players of his day, was born to the Dews in November.³⁶ Mrs. Drew's family was well represented

³⁴ Ibid., July 8, 1853.

³⁵ Durang, VI, 388.

³⁶ John Wheatley Sheridan Drew was born on November 13, 1853, according to St. Stephens Church Parish Records, (1823-1865), p. 310. As John Drew, he became an actor of some skill particularly in high comedy and was credited with doing much to raise the social status of the actor. He commanded respect and was esteemed by people both in and out of the profession. His wife was Miss Josephine Baker, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis F. (Alexina Fisher) Baker, and a granddaughter of Mrs. E. N. Thayer. Miss Louise Drew, their daughter, appeared in some of her father's presentations, but achieved no great success as an actress even though she could count many theatrical people among her ancestors. Her son, John Drew Devereaux is now making a bid for fame upon the boards.

John Drew followed the family practice of nepotism and gave members of his family, besides his daughter, a chance to act in his company. Miss Ethel Barrymore, a niece, spent several seasons with him, and Miss Georgie Drew Mendum, also a niece, acted in some of his plays. A program for the Powers Theatre, Chicago, dated April 24, 1899, states that John Drew, Ethel Barrymore, and Georgie Mendum all appeared in The Liars on that date. See scrapbook entitled Passing Show, Vol. III, Rare Book Collection, University of Chicago.

upon the stage of the Arch, for Mrs. Kinlock, her mother, played old ladies' roles, and Georgiana Kinlock, her half-sister, joined the company to play supporting roles. The Drew family was likewise well represented, for John Drew's brother, Frank Nelson Drew and his wife were also members of the company. To avoid confusion, or perhaps to keep people from knowing that this was something of a "family affair," the new additions were billed as Mr. and Mrs. Frank D. Nelson.

Mrs. David P. Bowers, a thoroughly competent actress, took over the leading feminine roles during the early months of the season and after Mrs. Drew's return to the company, alternated with her in performing them. Usually Mrs. Drew played the leading roles in comedy, while Mrs. Bowers acted the more serious roles.

Mrs. Drew's first appearance of the season was on December 10, when she appeared in The Love Chase. The play was presented through December 24,³⁷ and was revived at least five times during the season.

For the Christmas holiday, a new play, Paris and London was presented. John Dolman was Viscount Volatil "on a tour of pleasure," and Mrs. Drew was Lady Volatil, his wife "watching in the guise of a tiger." Drew was Thomas

³⁷ The Public Ledger, December 19-24, 1853.

Trot, Volatil's coachman, Mrs. Kinlock was Sally Trot, his wife, Miss Kinlock was Coralie, an opera dancer, and Mrs. F. D. Nelson was Rose, her French maid.³⁸ This piece, which was said to have had fine scenic effects,³⁹ was retained on the boards through January 6 as a single feature. Another play was added to the bill near the end of the run.⁴⁰

Worthy of note is the fact that plays were given a longer run at the Arch this season than they had been previously. The population of Philadelphia had increased, and the new managers doubtless felt that longer runs were practicable. Also, the theatre, with its "Star Company," had substantially increased business at the Arch and longer runs were necessary to meet the demands of increased patronage. The theatre, this season, ran two advertisements daily in the Public Ledger, one in the classified column, and another in the general advertisements. The increased advertising plus the high quality of the performances of the house, doubtless did much toward making the season the success that it was. Durang reported:

³⁸ Wheatley and Drew's Arch Street Theatre playbill, dated December 27, 1853, Pennsylvania Historical Society Collection of Programs and Playbills.

³⁹ The Public Ledger, January 2, 1854.

⁴⁰ Ibid., December 24, 1853-January 12, 1854.

The public appreciated this "star company," and liberally responded to the efforts of the youthful management. It seemed the object of Wheatley and Drew to restore the useful dignity of the stock players to their pristine position: to eschew wretched resort to half "stars:" to carry out a regular season: to make again, if possible, the stock actor an object of importance.⁴¹

Wheatley and Drew also decided to produce a series of Shakespearean plays with the stock corps alone, "aided by new scenic and costume accessories appropriate to the age, the customs, the architecture, and the persons." Macready had tried such productions some years before in London and had lost money. Charles Kean, on the other hand, in a similar venture several years later, had succeeded.⁴² Perhaps the youthful managers felt that this was incentive enough to begin.

The Comedy of Errors was first presented September 5,⁴³ with Wheatley and L. R. Shewell as the Antipholuses and the Drew brothers as the Dromios. This proved to be one of the most popular plays in the Arch's repertoire and was revived many times in this and subsequent seasons.⁴⁴

Romeo and Juliet was presented early in the season

⁴¹ Durang, VI, 388.

⁴² Ibid., 388.

⁴³ Wilson, p. 488.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 488-541.

and revived again in the spring. In the revival, Mrs. Drew was Romeo and Mrs. Bowers Juliet.⁴⁵

Twelfth Night was produced in January and was given ten performances with a cast that included Mrs. Drew as Viola, Mrs. Bowers as Olivia, Dolman as Orsino, Drew as Aguecheek, Thayer as Toby Belch, Wheatley as Malvolio, and Nelson as the clown. It was given two more performances in February and one in March.⁴⁶

Much Ado About Nothing was brought out in March and given seven productions.⁴⁷ Again Wheatley and Mrs. Drew played Beatrice and Benedict. The play was advertised as being played for the first time by "the Great Star Co. with new, very new costumes, mountings, etc." It was also said that the comedy had been in preparation for a number of weeks and would be produced "in brilliant style."⁴⁸ Durang reported that Mrs. Drew "with all her usual comedy excellence, acquitted [sic] herself with sparkling humor and spirit."⁴⁹ The Public Ledger called it the most successful Shakespearean presentation of the season.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Wilson, p. 487 and The Public Ledger, May 9, 13, 1854.

⁴⁶ Ibid., January 18-30, February 15, 21, March 24, 1854.

⁴⁷ Ibid., March 6-11, 23, 1854.

⁴⁸ Ibid., March 6, 1854.

⁴⁹ Durang, VI, 392.

⁵⁰ The Public Ledger, March 9, 1854.

As You Like It was the next of the bard's plays to undergo Wheatley and Drew production methods. Some of the cast members for this production were:

Rosalind-----	Mrs. John Drew
Celia-----	Miss G. Kinlock
Audrey-----	Mrs. Kinlock
Sylvius-----	F. D. Nelson
Touchstone-----	John Drew
Orlando-----	William Wheatley
Oliver-----	John Dolman
Adam-----	E. N. Thayer. ⁵¹

Again five members of the Drew-Kinlock family appeared together. The play was presented six nights in succession and received one additional production later in the month.⁵² A news item in the Public Ledger called this "the most successful Shakespearean comedy this season."⁵³ Perhaps each production improved in quality and the newspaper was able to make that statement more than once.

In addition to repeating many of her old roles, Mrs. Drew appeared in some new ones during the season. Apparently the role of Charlotte in The Hypocrite was one of them. It inspired a member of her audience to write on the margin of his playbill: "Mrs. John Drew played, as

⁵¹ Wheatley and Drew's Arch Street Theatre Playbill, April 8, 1854, Pennsylvania Historical Society Collection of Programs and Playbills.

⁵² The Public Ledger, April 3-8, 24, 1854.

⁵³ Ibid., April 5, 1854.

she always does, with vivacity, correctness and talent.

. . .⁵⁴

The actress is known to have appeared in forty-one different roles during the season, which is not a record for her, yet still a goodly number when one considers the fact that she joined the company almost four months after the season had started.⁵⁵ Also, the runs of the individual plays were in many instances much longer than in previous seasons.

After the season, which by all indications seems to have been successful, closed on July 4, the Drews and some of the members of the "Star Company" went to Albany to appear at Canoll's Green Street Theatre. F. N. Drew

⁵⁴ Wheatley and Drew's Arch Street Theatre Playbill, March 2, 1854, Pennsylvania Historical Society Collection of Programs and Playbills. Marginal note was signed W. Meredith.

⁵⁵ The Public Ledger, December 19, 1853-July 4, 1854 and/or Wheatley and Drew's Arch Street Theatre Playbills note that she appeared in the following-named roles: Laura (Sweethearts and Wives), Helen Worret (Man and Wife), Kate Kearney (Kate Kearney), Sally Downright (Secrets Worth Knowing), Phoebe (Paul Pry), and Tom Cross in (School for Tigers). In addition to those already named, she was also seen in The Married Rake, The Heir at Law, She Stoops to Conquer, The School for Scandal, Giralda, Ion, The Hunchback, The Rivals, Jane Shore, John Bull, The Hypocrite, The Soldier's Daughter, The Jealous Wife, The Belle's Stratagem, Love, Miseries of Human Life, Love's Sacrifice, The Irish Lion, The Honeymoon, Rule a Wife and Have a Wife, The Ladies' Battle, Sketches in India, The Road to Ruin, The Wonder, A Bold Stroke for a Husband, The Follies of a Night, Douglas, Satan in Paris, and Cousin Cherry.

was the acting manager of the house, and the group played with success for about ten days.⁵⁶

The second season at the Arch Street Theatre under the Wheatley and Drew's management began on August 19, 1854. Many of the same people were again with the company, including the Nelsons, (the Frank Drews), the Kinlocks, E. N. Thayer, and John Dolman. Mrs. Bowers left the company and went to the Chestnut Street Theatre, and Mrs. Drew played all the leading roles until about the middle of March, when she retired from the company for the remainder of the season. Miss Olive Logan, a new member of the group, appeared in feminine roles of secondary importance.

The season opened with the play, Money, which was also running at the Chestnut Street Theatre. Philadelphia theatregoers could see this play at either of the two houses, and they had their choice of seeing either Mrs. Drew or Mrs. Bowers in the role of Clara Douglas.⁵⁷

Wheatley and Drew's policy of management remained much the same this season as during the first. The company was again in the stellar position, there being no visiting stars. Durang said that the season was "not

⁵⁶ Phelps, 290.

⁵⁷ The Public Ledger, August 19, 1854.

very conspicuous for extraordinary novelty in the way of new melo-dramas or spectacles of scenic show," for "with a very good stock company, they relied upon their own merits and the old legitimate drama to work out their own salvation and restoration of the pure drama."⁵⁸

Again this season the emphasis was on the production of comedies, although two of Shakespeare's tragedies, Hamlet and Othello were revived. Mrs. Drew again played Ophelia but appeared in the role of Emilia in the second play rather than in that of Desdemona, which she had played before this time.⁵⁹

Probably the most spectacular production of the season was a revival of Mrs. Drew's favorite, Fortunio. It was given an elaborate production for the Christmas season. According to Durang, "it was full of beautiful scenery and magical changes." He noted that the "closing of the spectacle was very queer and effective." A pile of treasure opened and a "magnificent fairy car, drawn by twenty-four sheep with golden fleeces in which was the fairy," was disclosed.⁶⁰ Apparently this burlesque in which Mrs. Drew had first appeared more than ten years before

⁵⁸ Durang, VI, 410.

⁵⁹ The Public Ledger, October 7, 1854 for Hamlet; November 22, 25, 1854 and January 27, 1855 for Othello.

⁶⁰ Ibid., December 25, 1854-January 8, 1855, and January 13-23, 29, 1855.

still had the power to delight audiences, for it had a "good run" at the Arch.

London Assurance, in which Mrs. Drew played Lady Gay Spanker, also seemed to be popular, for it ran for more than three weeks. Doubtless it was given a lavish production, also.⁶¹

Mrs. Drew took over the role of Adriana in The Comedy of Errors, the Shakespearian comedy made popular by her husband and brother-in-law at the Arch.⁶² This was the only one of the forty-nine or more different roles she played while she was with the company this season.⁶³

March 10 seems to have been the date of Mrs.

⁶¹ Ibid., October 23-November 11, 1854.

⁶² Ibid., October 9, 1854, Mrs. Drew's name appeared in a cast list. The play was frequently repeated again this season.

⁶³ The Public Ledger, August 19, 1854-March 10, 1855 and/or Wheatley and Clarke's Arch Street Theatre Playbills note her appearance in the following-named roles: Jessie Oatland (A Cure for the Heartache), Lady Townly (The Provoked Husband), Kitty Skylark (Single Life), Bertha (Point of Honor), Miss Dorrillon (Wives as They Were and Maids as They Are) in addition to the roles already named. She also appeared in Romance and Reality, The Swiss Swains, She Would and She Would Not, Rule a Wife and Have a Wife, Paul Pry, The Hypocrite, Satan in Paris, The Will, Wild Oats, Married Life, The Jealous Wife, The Apostate, The Road to Ruin, The Serious Family, The Stranger, The Belle's Stratagem, The Honeymoon, The Irish Ambassador, John Bull, The Good for Nothing, The Gamester, The School for Scandal, Sketches in India, Perfection, She Stoops to Conquer, The Soldier's Daughter, Old Heads and Young Hearts, Ion, The Heir at Law, The Wife, William Tell, The Castle Spectre, and Jane Shore.

Drew's last appearance with the company this season. The leading roles were taken over first by Mrs. Amelia Parker and then by Mrs. Ryner.⁶⁴

It is quite possible that the actress retired from the stage at this time to await the birth of a third child, Georgiana Drew.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Ibid., March 10-July 3, 1854.

⁶⁵ Georgiana Elizabeth (Georgie) Drew's birthdate has been given as 1854, 1855, and 1856. Her tombstone, Mount Vernon Cemetery, Philadelphia, gives her natal date as 1855. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Parish Register (1823-1865), p. 310, recorded the date as being July 11, 1854. The date was not recorded until she was baptized, March 24, 1859, and the record now extant may be a copy rather than the original. This register, pp. 314-315, gives the date of her funeral, July 12, 1893, and states that she was thirty-eight years old. The 1854 date is thought to be in error, for Mrs. Drew played a full season in Philadelphia that year including a summer engagement in Albany. Then, too, she had had another child, John Drew, only eight months before. The Dictionary of National Biography I, p. 659, gives the date of her birth as July 11, 1856. L. Barrymore, We Barrymores (genealogical table) also gives the date as 1856. This date also seems impossible, since Mrs. Drew was not absent from the stage in 1856. Therefore, the date 1855 seems to be the logical one.

Georgie Drew married Maurice Barrymore and was a promising young comedienne and the mother of three children when she died July 2, 1893. Her children were to grow up to become successful stage and motion picture actors. Some of her grandchildren, Diana Barrymore, Ethel Barrymore Colt, John Barrymore II, and John Drew Colt have appeared on the stage.

Oddly enough, at the end of their second year of successful management of the Arch Street Theatre, John Drew and William Wheatley dissolved partnership.⁶⁶ Both received increased prestige from their efforts to operate a good stock company without the help of outside actors, and both achieved reputations as capable actors in the city of Philadelphia. The Public Ledger, upon the occasion of one of Drew's benefits, commented;

Mr. John Drew is taking his benefit this evening at the Arch Street Theatre, and he gives a rare entertainment for the occasion. The comedies of "Single Life" and "Married Life" will be performed with a recitation by John Drew, of the "Story of the Irish Rebellion" written by Lover. Mr. Drew is indefatigable [sic] in his endeavors to please the public, and the nightly crowds at his establishment show that the public know how to appreciate his efforts. There will be additional evidence to the same effect this evening, for the crowd [sic] will not be large enough to hold all who will desire to see the performance.⁶⁷

On June 20, when Drew retired, a testimonial benefit was given for him.⁶⁸ Apparently the separation of the partners was an amicable one, for Mrs. Drew was associated with Wheatley for many years after he and her husband

⁶⁶ Durang, VI, 410, reported that the last season opened with Money "which happily became the augury of the entire season, for their treasury flourished throughout this very hard winter of 1854-55."

⁶⁷ The Public Ledger, November 29, 1854.

⁶⁸ Wheatley and Drew's Arch Street Theatre Playbill, June 20, 1855, announced benefit for Drew given upon his retirement. Pennsylvania Historical Society Collection of Programs and Playbills.

ceased to be partners. Drew seems to have been a restless member of the profession, if we are to judge by his later theatrical ventures, and by Mrs. Drew's own word of him.⁶⁹

At the close of the 1854-55 season, the oldest member of the Kinlock-Drew family took permanent leave of the stage.⁷⁰ Mrs. Eliza Kinlock, then almost sixty years old, retired after having played in this country for almost twenty-eight years. Although never a leading lady or star, Mrs. Kinlock served as supporting actress to many leading players of her day and was a valuable member of the companies in which she appeared. She never seemed to lack engagements, and during her long career, played singing roles, "chambermaids," general utility parts, and old ladies' roles. Besides making a place for herself, Mrs. Kinlock had introduced her three daughters, Mrs. Drew and the Misses Kinlock, to the stage.

Mrs. Kinlock's retirement seems not to have been planned, for no announcement was found concerning it, and seemingly she did not make a farewell appearance. According to Mrs. Drew, she made a trip to England and Ireland with her son-in-law, John Drew.⁷¹ She may have decided to

⁶⁹ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 142.

⁷⁰ The Philadelphia Inquirer, August 12, 1887.

⁷¹ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 106.

retire upon her return rather than seek a new engagement.⁷²

There must have been some confusion in the minds of Philadelphia playgoers about the Mrs. Drews appearing in that city during the early part of the 1855-56 season. Mrs. Frank N. Drew, who remained at the Arch, appeared under her own name, and Mrs. John Drew joined the Walnut Street Company. Advertisements, however, frequently omitted the given names in cast lists, so people doubtless wondered which one was which.⁷³ The fact that both of them played a new role, that of Mrs. Hector Sternhold in a play called Still Waters Run Deep, probably added to the confusion.⁷⁴

On October 11, Mrs. John Drew appeared in the first Philadelphia presentation of George H. Boker's Francesca da Rimini. The production of this play was an event of first importance in Philadelphia theatre history, according to Wilson, who closed his study of the stage of

⁷² The Public Ledger, November 6, 1855, announced Drew's appearance at the Walnut upon his return from Europe.

⁷³ The confusion would probably have been even greater if each actress had been billed by her given name, for both were named Louisa. Mrs. Frank Drew (Louisa Magness) had been married to C. L. Stone. They had a daughter who later appeared on the stage as Louisa D. Drew. See Brown, History of the American Stage, p. 105.

⁷⁴ The Public Ledger, August 19-October 11, 1855.

that city with the year of its production. In this connection Wilson wrote:

The play, which is Philadelphia's own, comes as the grand climax to the growth of the romantic tragedy in verse during our period, and as a fitting climax to our account of twenty-one years in the history of the Philadelphia theatre.⁷⁵

The cast of Francesca da Rimini at the Walnut included E. L. Davenport in the role of Lanciotto,⁷⁶ and A. H. Davenport as Paolo. The play was given on three successive nights.

Mrs. John Drew was given a benefit on December 6, at which time her husband, brother-in-law, and John Collins, the Irish comedian appeared. On this occasion the Public Ledger commented:

Mrs. Drew's great merits as an actress are recognized wherever she goes, and at the Walnut she has made herself as popular as she was at the Arch.⁷⁷

The Walnut operated under the star system, and Edwin Forrest paid a visit to the theatre in December. This season Mrs. Drew played different supporting roles in some of his plays. For example, she played Emilia in

⁷⁵ Wilson, p. 53.

⁷⁶ Edward L. Davenport (1815-1877), versatile American actor was also well known for his portrayals of Hamlet and Brutus. After touring with Anna Cora Mowatt, he became a star in his own right. He and his wife, Fanny Vining Davenport, were founders of the famous Davenport family of American actors. The celebrated Miss Fanny Davenport was their daughter.

⁷⁷ The Public Ledger, December 6, 1855.

Othello, this time, and in previous engagements with Forrest, she had played Desdemona. In Hamlet, she was Gertrude instead of Ophelia as formerly. And in Damon and Pythias, she played Hermione rather than Calanthe. Miss Weston played the younger women's roles. Mrs. Drew also appeared as Lady Macbeth, Elizabeth (Richard III), Marianne (Jack Cade), and Elvira (Pizarro). She repeated some of these roles during his second engagement and also played Goneril in King Lear.⁷⁸

Again, Fortunio was revived for the holiday season. It opened for New Year's Eve and stayed on the boards continuously through January 17, except for two nights when operas were presented. Drew appeared in the role of King Alfourite, which he had played the previous season, and Mrs. Drew was, of course, Fortunio. The Public Ledger, in its announcement of the burlesque on December 31, said: "We have never had an actress to excel her in this peculiar line of character."⁷⁹

Frank Drew must have joined the Walnut in January, for the two Dromios began to cavort on this stage on January 21.⁸⁰ The Walnut presentation offered something in the way of a novelty as far as the Antipholuses were

⁷⁸ Ibid., December 10-29, 1855, April 15-May 2, 1856.

⁷⁹ Ibid., December 31, 1855. Fortunio ran from December 31, 1855-January 11, 1856 and received subsequent productions January 15, 17, 28, 29, 31, February 1, 20-22, 1856.

⁸⁰ Ibid., January 21-29, February 1, 4, 1856.

concerned. Miss Weston was Antipholus of Syracuse and Mrs. Drew was Antipholus of Ephesus! A marginal note on a playbill commented that Miss Weston and Mrs. Drew were "very good indeed," and the Dromios were "very amusing." Another notation on the bill was to the effect that Miss Dickens, after playing Adriana for a little while, relinquished it to Mrs. Stoneall when she became hoarse. The same lady was scheduled to appear in the afterpiece, but Mrs. Drew replaced her in her assigned role of Polly Bobolink in The Irish Emigrant.⁸¹

Late in the season Mrs. Drew was Charming, the First in a fairy extravaganza entitled King Charming.⁸² This piece received an elaborate production, and from the description of the mounting, one would imagine that the actors must have had difficulty competing with the scenic effects.

Mrs. Drew participated in The Varieties which were a vaudeville-like type of entertainment with new acts added from time to time. She played in a travesty of Camille.⁸³

⁸¹ Walnut Street Theatre Playbill, January 21, 1856, Pennsylvania Historical Society Collection of Programs and Playbills.

⁸² The Public Ledger, May 5-17, 1856.

⁸³ Ibid., June 12-19, 1856.

During her association with the Walnut, Mrs. Drew is known to have acted more than thirty different roles.⁸⁴ Since the house frequently depended upon visiting stars for its chief attractions, it may be that she appeared in many more plays than the advertisements, which featured the starring engagements, indicate. Again this season Fortunio appears to have been her most popular piece. Even though she gave up some of the younger roles in tragedies in which she appeared, she still seems to have been able to create the spirit of youth in Fortunio.

Mrs. John Drew returned to Wheatley's Arch Street Theatre for the 1856-57 season. Seemingly she held the position of leading comedienne and Mrs. D. P. Bowers was the leading lady in most of the serious roles.

The season, which Mrs. Drew opened with The School for Scandal, was notable because it gave the actress a

⁸⁴ The Public Ledger, October 11, 1855-June 19, 1856 notes her appearance in the following-named roles: Rose Western (Confounded Foreigners), Ruth Ravenscar (Two Loves and a Life), Gertrude (The Little Treasure), Helen McGregor (Rob Roy) in addition to those roles already named. She also played in The Serious Family, Sweethearts and Wives, The Good for Nothing, Naval Engagements, The Irish Ambassador, Paul Pry, Delicate Ground, Follies of a Night, Satan in Paris, The Apostate, The Hypocrite, and The Goslings.

number of new roles, some in spectacular productions, others in comedies, and some few in serious plays.⁸⁵

"An Arabian Night's entertainment" was the description given the first of the spectacular pieces. It was entitled Abon Hassan, and Mrs. Drew played the title role.⁸⁶

The Christmas production, which received twelve consecutive performances, was also a spectacular piece. It was called The Ethiop, and Mrs. Drew played a character named Orasmyn.⁸⁷

The Sea of Ice, or a Thirst for Gold probably aroused a great deal of interest at the Arch. Mrs. Drew played Louise de Lascours, wife of the Captain of the ship 'Urania' in the first two acts, and in the third, she was Ogarita, the wild woman of Mexico.⁸⁸ The Sea of Ice had the longest run of the season.⁸⁹

The last spectacular production was The Naiad Queen, and although Mrs. Drew was mentioned as a company

⁸⁵ Ibid., August 16, 1856-June 6, 1857.

⁸⁶ Ibid., September 22-27, October 1, 1856, January 29, 1857.

⁸⁷ Ibid., December 24, 1856-January 6, 1857.

⁸⁸ Wheatley's Arch Street Theatre Playbill, May 1, 1857, Pennsylvania Historical Society Collection of Programs and Playbills.

⁸⁹ The Public Ledger, April 13-May 3, May 6, 7, June 1, 1857.

member in the advertisements, her role was not given. Doubtless she was Lurline, a role she played at a later date. This piece also enjoyed a long run.⁹⁰

Shakespeare was not neglected at the Arch this season, for Wheatley brought out Hamlet and Othello again, as well as Much Ado About Nothing, Twelfth Night, and The Merry Wives of Windsor. Mrs. Drew was again seen as Gertrude, Emilia, Beatrice, and Viola. In the last-named play, she was Mrs. Ford and sang with Miss Anna Cruise I Know a Bank Where the Wild Thyme Grows.⁹¹ Wheatley also brought out King John, but Mrs. Drew's name did not appear in advertisements for this production. In a revival of Henry IV, she was Lady Hotspur.⁹² The actress took her annual benefit on June 2, when she appeared in Masks and Faces. On this occasion the Public Ledger reminded Philadelphians that:

Mrs. Drew's talents in her profession are well known, and the many admirers of her acting will be glad of the opportunity to gratify themselves and compliment her by their presence at her benefit.⁹³

⁹⁰ Ibid., May 9-29, 1857.

⁹¹ Ibid., December 11, 12, 1856, January 15, 24, 1857 were the dates of the first four plays listed. The Merry Wives of Windsor was given September 10-19, 26, October 9, 1856 and January 30, 1857. The song is from Midsummer Night's Dream.

⁹² The Public Ledger, March 2-13, 1857.

⁹³ Ibid., June 2, 1857.

This season at the Arch, during which she is known to have appeared in forty-nine different roles,⁹⁴ drew to a close on June 6. Mrs. Drew did not take a summer vacation, but went over to the National Theatre, which her husband had opened in April,⁹⁵ and played the summer season under his management.

John Drew's second venture in theatre management in Philadelphia was not successful, and Mrs. Drew said later that he lost all his property in the venture.⁹⁶ Drew's company included himself, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Drew,

⁹⁴ The Public Ledger June 6-August 19, 1857 and/or Wheatley's Arch Street Theatre Playbills note her appearances in the following-named roles: Mrs. Apex (Self), Rose Ellsworth (Love in '76), Miss Blanford (Speed the Plough), Mrs. Simeon Lullaby (The Conjugal Lesson), Thea (The Marble Heart), Nell Gwynn (The King's Rival), Mary (The Two Queens), Lady Rodolpha (The Man of the World), Caroline Dalton (Nature's Nobleman), the Dauphin (Louis XI), Catarina (La Tisbe), and Lady Bell (Know Your Own Mind), in addition to those roles already noted. She also acted in The Hunchback, She Would and She Would Not, The Wonder, Old Heads and Young Hearts, The Honeymoon, Damon and Pythias, John Bull, The Dramatist, The Soldier's Daughter, The Jealous Wife, The Hypocrite, The Belle's Stratagem, The Rivals, Simpson & Co., The School for Scandal, Delicate Ground, The Ladies' Battle, Ion, Rule a Wife and Have a Wife, The Love Chase, Still Waters Run Deep, Married Life and Satan in Paris.

⁹⁵ On April 23, 1857, Drew opened the National Theatre for one night. Regular performances started May 18.

⁹⁶ In a letter dated March, 1878, Mrs. Drew wrote: "The theatre was unsuccessful and closed Aug. 8/57--Mr. Drew having lost all his property in the venture." This letter is attached to the index to Durang, V.

Georgiana Kinlock, Joseph Jefferson, Miss Mary Devlin (later Mrs. Edwin Booth), and Mrs. Drew.

Drew produced one spectacular production, The Naiad Queen, early in the season, but most of the plays presented were comedies. Mrs. Drew did not appear in The Naiad Queen, but she did act at least twenty-two other roles.⁹⁷

Joseph Jefferson and Mrs. Drew made their first appearance together in Sheridan's The Rivals during the summer. Jefferson appeared in the role in which he was later to become famous, that of Bob Acres. Mrs. Drew was Lydia Languish in this production, for she did not take over the role of Mrs. Malaprop until about thirty years later.⁹⁸

The company shared programs from July 27 through August 7 with Mons. Godard, "Great Balloon King and

⁹⁷ The Public Ledger, June 11-August 7, 1857 notes her appearance in the following-named roles: Fanny Morrison (Mind Your Own Business), the Mountain Maid (The Mountain Maid), Marco (The Marble Heart) in addition to the roles already noted. She also appeared in: Grist to the Mill, The Eton Boy, Agnes de Vere, Beauty and the Beast, Delicate Ground, Somebody Else, The Heir at Law, The Goslings, The Miseries of Human Life, Paul Pry, She Would and She Would Not, Sweethearts and Wives, Masks and Faces, The Hypocrite, My Neighbor's Wife, The Soldier's Daughter, The Good for Nothing, and Giralda.

⁹⁸ Ibid., June 19, 1857.

Emperor of the Wizards" before Drew closed the doors of the National Theatre.⁹⁹

In the autumn of 1857, Mr. and Mrs. John Drew went on tour, possibly with the hope of earning enough money to offset the losses Drew sustained in the National Theatre venture. If so, they did not succeed, for it was reported later that it was necessary for them to sell their home to clear themselves of debt, after which their financial resources amounted to but fifteen dollars.¹⁰⁰

The Drews' lack of financial success in their enterprises for the year was probably due to the general business depression of 1857 rather than to any lack of ability on their part. Much of the population of the country this year was concerned with gaining the necessities of life, and people doubtless were loath to spend money for theatre tickets.

The Drews were well received in at least three of the cities in which they had engagements, Nashville, New Orleans, and Memphis, even though the financial rewards

⁹⁹ Ibid., July 27-August 7, 1857.

¹⁰⁰ J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, "Prominent Women in Philadelphia," History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884 (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts and Co., 1884) II, 1699, report the date of the tour as 1855-56. These historians must have erred as far as the date was concerned, for Mrs. Drew did not tour with her husband until 1857. He toured alone in 1855.

were not great.

When the Drews appeared in New Orleans, a newspaper from that city reported that they had been "playing a series of very successful western engagements," and noted that the Nashville papers were "particularly decided and eloquent in their favor." One Nashville newspaper even said: "It is very seldom that we are favored with artistes in every respect so accomplished."¹⁰¹

On the day of Drew's opening in New Orleans, the Daily Picayune had the following announcement:

MR. AND MRS. JOHN DREW AT THE GAIETY.--Mr. Crisp presents us, this evening with the first stars of his season, Mr. and Mrs. John Drew; both of whom have attained a richly deserved eminence as comedians of great excellence, in many cities of the Union.

Who does not remember the fascinating Miss Lane, afterwards Mrs. Henry Hunt, the piquant and spirituelle actress of sparkling comedy; the very embodiment of burlesque in the performance of such parts as "Fortunio," the "Fair maid with the golden-locks, etc?" And who, when we tell them that this fascinating actress returns to us, now, in the plenitude of her powers, and strengthened in her attractiveness, by the admirable talents of her gifted husband, will not secure to themselves the pleasure of witnessing their joint performances?

They appear, this evening, at Crisp's Gaiety, for the first time, Mrs. Drew as Francine, in the charming comediotta of "Grist to the Mill," and Mr. Drew, as the inimitable Handy Andy, in the comic piece of that name, dramatized from the novel so called.

¹⁰¹ The Daily Picayune, October 20, 1857.

They who go to the Gaiety, to-night will be sure to enjoy themselves.¹⁰²

The Delta, which had been extremely enthusiastic about Mrs. Drew's acting some ten years before was now somewhat cautious in its opening announcement. The reporter for this paper stated: "They drew well in other places--let us see what they will do in New Orleans. They possess a high Northern reputation, but the Northern reputations are so much the result of paid penny a liners that they cannot always be depended upon."¹⁰³ This obviously was not the same writer who had been so eloquent in writing of the actress' work in 1847. Indeed, it would seem as if the Delta writer of old had moved over to the rival Picayune in the meantime, for the Picayune reviews this season had somewhat the same tone as the Delta's reviews of the earlier season. After the opening performance, the Picayune reported:

Mrs. John Drew made her first appearance in this city last evening, in the telling part of Francine, in "Grist to the Mill," one of the prettiest comediettas on the modern stage. Since we saw this lady last (she was then Mrs. H. Hunt,) time has dealt very gently with her, as far as looks are concerned, and the experience she has had in her profession has greatly improved her in every point, in which we can compare her present with the past. She has the same musical voice, the same ease and grace of movement

¹⁰² Ibid., October 21, 1857.

¹⁰³ The Daily Delta, October 21, 1857.

and manner, the same winning smile and all those indescribable nuances, which combined to make her deservedly one of the most popular favorites of the American stage.

Mrs. Drew displayed, in her personation of the light-hearted, merry miller's widow, all that sparkling vivacity for which she was ever remarkable. She made, of course, a most pleasing impression upon the audience that were so fortunate as to be present, the number of which, we may take leave to express the hope, will be exceeded by that of this evening, when she sustains three characters. We can assure the lovers of the elegant drama, and of elegant acting, a rich treat in that of this accomplished comedienne.¹⁰⁴

This reviewer also reported favorably upon Drew's performance of Handy Andy, which was said to have been "conceived in the very spirit of the original description and portraiture."

The Delta's review was lukewarm in its praise:

The appearance of Mr. and Mrs. John Drew, the first "stars" at the Gaiety did not attract a large audience. Nor did the audience seem particularly enthusiastic with the performance. Mrs. Drew, as Francine, in the "Grist to the Mill," was vivacious and easy, while Mr. Drew's "Handy Andy" was spirited, but nothing really remarkable. It will require better acting than we saw last night to satisfy a New Orleans audience. . . . We hope that the "stars" will shine brighter to-night. They may become more lustrous the oftener we look at them. We shall see.¹⁰⁵

A third newspaper, the New-Orleans Crescent, reported:

¹⁰⁴ The Daily Picayune, October 23, 1857. "From Yesterday's Evening Edition."

¹⁰⁵ The Daily Delta, October 22, 1857.

Mr. and Mrs. John Drew made their debut last night to an audience somewhat better than that of the previous night, though it was still uncomfortably slim. Mrs. Drew, as Francine, in the comedy of "Grist to the Mill," made a very favorable impression, being pretty and full of dramatic fire. She was called out at the close. Mr. Drew, in "Handy Andy," showed himself to be a very good Irish comedian of the clownish kind. A good bill is offered for tonight, and those who go for a laugh will not be disappointed.¹⁰⁶

The Daily Picayune had high praise for Drew's Sir Patrick O'Flenipo in the Drews' second offering, The Irish Ambassador. It said of Mrs. Drew's work in the same play and in the protean piece, Love and Charity, which shared the bill:

Mrs. Drew's personation of the lively part of Isabella, like everything else this charming actress does, was spirited, sparkling, and satisfactory. . . .

Mrs. Drew, last evening, played three parts in a well-enough trifle of the protean class, with Mr. Drew as a quaint kind of Paddy. The only thing particularly noticeable in the piece, was the clever assumption, by the lady, of the character of a charity girl. The makeup, snuffle, repetition of extracts from the whole duty of servants and the song of the "Soldier Boy," were all first rate in their way.¹⁰⁷

The Delta seemed not to like the Drews' second offering any better than the first, and gave Drew a very unfavorable review. The reviewer made the following comments on the attendance and upon the Drews' engagement:

There was a slim attendance at the Gaiety last

¹⁰⁶ The New-Orleans Crescent, October 22, 1857.

¹⁰⁷ The Daily Picayune, October 24, 1857, "From the Evening Edition."

evening, owing, in part, we suppose, to the inclement weather. Yet we have seen the rain looked upon as of but little consequence when a lustrous star was the attraction. Perhaps the financial pressure is operating upon the Gaiety as upon the patronage of the New York Theatres. At all events the Drews do not draw.

One of our Camp street contemporaries, in its evening edition, indulged in the romantic idea that these people are capital in their roles. We have yet to see it. The vision of others may be clearer than ours, but really we have rarely seen fainter lights than have, for the last two evenings, appeared upon the boards of Manager Crisp. We repeat that we still hope for better things, and in that event the readers of the Delta shall certainly know it. . . .

From the present indications we fear we shall be compelled to class the "stars" at the Gaiety with good stock actors. The world is getting too full of traveling stock actors, if we may be allowed the expression, and the press should physic the patients that are afflicted with the modern starring epidemic. However, we are willing to see yet more of the Drews.¹⁰⁸

After the Drews' third appearance, the same newspaper reported:

There was a slimmer audience last evening than has yet been seen at the Gaiety since the engagement of the Drews. Inclement weather, this time, had nothing to do with it, and, therefore, we conclude that either the financial pressure, or the unattractiveness of the "stars," caused the sad lack of men and women on the occasion. John Drew lacks fire and energy, even as a low comedian, while the lady, though a very good stock actress, is too far past the equinoctial line of stage attractiveness to throw a New Orleans audience into a spasm of delight. We learn that they are to play here two weeks. "Think of that, Master Brook!" We beg Manager Crisp either to look out for reinforcements, or hurry along the other stars. We repeat, that if we see anything

¹⁰⁸ The Daily Delta, October 23, 1857.

praiseworthy in the personations of these people we will cheerfully give them full credit for it. So far, we have seen nothing in their representations but what is to be found in those of good stock actors.¹⁰⁹

The plays offered on their third appearance were:

The Irish Attorney, Cousin Cherry, and Handy Andy.

On October 26, Mr. and Mrs. Drew were seen in As You Like It and were supported by the Gaiety Company, which on the whole seems not to have been very competent. The reviewers seemed to be in accord on this point, at any rate. The Picayune, as might be expected, was the most enthusiastic in its praise of Mrs. Drew's acting of the leading role:

Mrs. Drew was a charming Rosalind, looking, acting, speaking and evidently feeling the part with the most thorough and perfect appreciation. The performance overran with noticeable beauties. We shall not undertake to cite them all, not having the space at command for so elaborate an article as to do so would require. But we must say how much we were delighted with all her dialogue with Orlando, when pretending to personate Rosalind. In the first scene of the fourth act, Mrs. Drew certainly left nothing to be desired. As Celia afterwards told her, she most naively "misused her sex in her love-prate." At the point where Orlando pleads, as excuse for leaving her, that he must attend the Duke at dinner, the assumption of an offended manner, the spoilt-childish pouting way in which she whimpered out, "Ay! go your ways, go your ways; I knew what you would prove, my friends told me as much, and I thought no less that flattering tongue of yours won me; 'tis but one cast away; and so (whimper) come death;" and then seeing Orlando is really taking her in earnest,

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., October 24, 1857.

the killing way in which, changing her whole manner and her voice, she adds, "two o'clock is your hour?" It was, to our appreciation, the perfection of acting. And so, we are free to add, was the whole part as presented by Mrs. Drew. She sang and acted the cuckoo song very prettily.¹¹⁰

The same reviewer said that he had never seen a Touchstone "more accurately conceived, more effectively read, and in every way more satisfactorily acted" than Mr. Drew's.

The Delta reviewer, before saying a good word about Drew's Touchstone, disparaged his Irish characterizations at some length. The reviewer's praise, even of this performance, was not wholehearted, however, for he said: "The fact is, Shakespearian characters are the severest tests of an actor's ability, and, judging him by this standard, and totally disregarding his pretensions as a "star," we are free to say that he evinced considerable ability." The Delta reviewer was somewhat more complimentary in regard to Mrs. Drew's efforts:

Mrs. Drew made an excellent Rosalind. The makeup, and the acting throughout were such as to do credit to her taste and talents. The lady is much better adapted to the elevated and immortal than to the coarser and ephemeral drama. Hitherto, we had seen nothing that indicated real ability, and when we say that her Rosalind was easy, graceful, and elegant, we have said enough. . . .

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The Daily Picayune, October 28, 1857, "From

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The Daily Picayune, October 28, 1857, "From Yesterday's Evening Edition."

The Knight of Arva, with Drew as Connor, and Mrs. Drew as Princess Marina, and Black-Eyed Susan, with the pair in the roles of William and Susan, was the next offering. Apparently this was their second performance of the first play, for the Picayune said that they would "repeat their performance of the charming play of 'Knight of Arva,' " which had already been given by them there with decided success." The reviewer said that their characterizations were both "admirable" and said that they should be "witnessed by the lovers of the elegant and well acted drama." In the same article the Picayune writer commented upon the audiences and the reception given them:

The Drews are now having good houses, and all who see them are charmed with their acting. It is long, indeed, since we have had on our stage comedians more attractive and satisfactory. Their engagement lasts but a few evenings longer, and we trust they will be supported as they deserve while they stay with us.¹¹¹

After having attended the above-mentioned program, the same reviewer commented:

The more we see of the excellent comedians who are now playing at this theatre, the greater reason we find for the universal approval with which, wherever they have performed, they have been so heartily greeted. There was a little better attendance last night than hitherto, since the commencement of their engagement, and their performance of the beautiful comedy of "The Knight of Arva," and the nautical drama of "Black Eyed Susan" met with the most decided approbation.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Ibid., October 27, 1857.

¹¹² Ibid., October 29, 1857, "From Yesterday's Evening Edition."

The Delta, on the other hand, reported that there was "a tolerably fair house" at the theatre, but "like the prevailing monetary affairs of the city, it presented plenty of room for improvement." Perhaps the writer for this newspaper was now willing to concede the fact that the depressed state of affairs of the nation had something to do with the poor attendance at the theatre. He was not, however, willing to give the players full credit for their efforts and said that Drew "appeared to considerable effect" as William and that Mrs. Drew "was more than so-so-ish as Susan--but not much, except in the scene before the last, where she counterfeited a faint with noticeable success."¹¹³

Mrs. Drew was given a benefit on October 28, and on that day the Crescent called the occasion to the attention of its subscribers by stating: "This lady has shown herself to be a most clever and charming comedienne, and is eminently deserving of a benefit. . . . We hope to see a good house."¹¹⁴ The Delta carried the advertisement for the benefit, but made no comment.¹¹⁵ The Picayune, however, supported the actress wholeheartedly:

¹¹³ The Daily Delta, October 28, 1857.

¹¹⁴ The New-Orleans Crescent, October 28, 1857.

¹¹⁵ The Daily Delta, October 28, 1857.

Crisp's Gaiety--Mrs. John Drew's Benefit--Place aux dames!--Mrs. Drew, the charming actress who has been delighting all who have heard her, the last week in a round of brilliant personations, takes her benefit this evening, and we bespeak for her, in the name of gallantry, and of the drama, a house such as her eminent merits so richly deserve.

Two pieces, new to our audience, will be given in this occasion--First, the elegant comedy entitled "The ladies' battle," in which Mrs. Drew will sustain the part of the Countess d'Autreval, and Mr. Drew that of Gustave de Grignon. Miss S. Bishop will introduce a character dance, and then will be performed Powers' admirable historical drama, "White horse of the Peppers," Mr. Drew being the Gerald Pepper (a fine character,) with a song, and Mrs. Drew, Agatha, also with a song. . . .¹¹⁶

The Delta's review of the benefit performance followed much the same pattern as previous comments in that newspaper:

A fair audience assembled at the Gaiety last evening, on the occasion of the benefit of Mrs. Drew. The lady, as Countess d'Autreval, in the comedy of the "Ladies' Battle," played with considerable spirit, but Mr. Drew's personation of Gustave de Grignon did not rise above mediocrity. The pit, however, having made up its mind that he is at all times a funny man, laughed heartily at some jokes which were not very brilliantly delivered, and so Gustave was esteemed an agreeable fellow. En passant, we may remark that Mrs. Drew's chief defect is immobility of feature. Save Rosalind, we have seen nothing in her performance worth especial mention.¹¹⁷

If the Drews were disheartened by the Delta's remarks, they had only to turn to the Picayune to be cheered.

¹¹⁶ The Daily Picayune, October 28, 1857.

¹¹⁷ The Daily Delta, October 29, 1857.

Their champion on this newspaper reported:

The pretty comedy of "The Ladies' Battle" was played last evening, at this theatre, to an audience, which though respectable in numbers, and quite fashionable was by no means what such attractions, and on the occasion of the benefit of so charming an actress should have drawn. Both she and her husband played their parts in this piece with great spirit and effect.

The reviewer went on to unfold the plot of The White Horse of the Peppers and pronounced Drew's personation of the principal character excellent. He said that Drew "very skillfully contrasted the gentleman with the peasant Irishman, sustaining the two with equal accuracy and efficiency." Mrs. Drew was said to have played her small part "charmingly, as she does everything."¹¹⁸

Only one review was found for the October 30 performance and that was in the Delta:

Last night was the eleventh of the engagement of Mr. and Mrs. John Drew. So far, they have failed to draw good houses. For the past two evenings, the audiences, though slim enough before, have grown "small by degrees and beautifully less. Three pieces, the "Ladies' Battle," "More Blunders than One," and "Good for Nothing," did not attract yesternight more persons than can usually be found at a parlor entertainment. We could not resist feeling that the name "Gaiety" was a misnomer, when we glanced around at the rows of empty chairs on every hand, and the solemn appearance of most of those present. If Manager Crisp does not hereafter give us something more attractive than we now have at this theatre, he will, indeed, make "more blunders than one"! We saw nothing in the acting of the "eminent and versatile performers," as the bill had it worthy of notice. We are more and more impressed

¹¹⁸ The Daily Picayune, October 30, 1857, "From Yesterday's Evening Edition."

with the belief that these "stars" will not glitter in the Southern dramatic sky.¹¹⁹

This was the second expression on the part of the Delta writer (the first was in the announcement of the Drew's first appearance) which gives rise to the idea that he may not have been unbiased in his opinions, but may have allowed thoughts to sectionalism to influence his judgment. Although it was before the Civil War, some people at this time felt strongly the differences between the two regions. It may be that the writer for the Delta was one of these people. His criticisms are, on the whole, not constructive ones; they too frequently depend upon a pun or a turn of a phrase to give the effect of wit. Perhaps the writer lacked a background of theatrical experience upon which to draw for comparisons and resorted to superficial cleverness to gain attention. He was, however, quick to accuse his colleagues of lacking critical judgment. It may be true, of course, that the writer was sincere in his belief that the Drews were, at best, good stock players, although at times he hardly accorded them that distinction; but one doubts that this is the case, for he seemed to display a negative attitude in reviews which preceded and followed the Drews' engagement. Whatever the reason or reasons for his generally unfavorable

¹¹⁹ The Daily Delta, October 31, 1857.

reviews, it is nonetheless interesting to note that they were the only ones to give small praise to Mrs. Drew for her work in comedy. While other writers were not as rhapsodic as the Delta writer of a decade earlier, or the Picayune writer for the year under consideration, writers consistently praised the actress throughout her career for her work in this line of acting. Drew seems also to have earned an enviable reputation as a comedian of merit.

The Picayune and the Crescent devoted much of their space during the next few days to the elections which were scheduled for November 2. They did no more than run the advertisements for the October 31 program which was The Serious Family, and O'Flanigan and the Fairies, and the November bill which consisted of Rory O'More and The Toodles. The Crescent reported on November 2 that the Drews had "become very popular with those who visit the Gaiety regularly."

The Delta reviewed The Serious Family, which had been one of the Drews' most popular pieces in Philadelphia, and found it wanting. Apparently this bill was a repetition of the October 31 program, for O'Flanigan and the Fairies was the second piece:

The Gaiety, last evening, was not at all crowded. We found abundance of room in any part of the house. The splendiferous acting of the Drews seems not to be appreciated by the lovers of dramatic amusements

in this city. The "Serious Family" was represented somewhat better than on Saturday evening, yet by no means finely. . . . 120

On November 3, the "last appearance but one" of the Drews was announced. The Picayune commented that their houses had been growing better and better from the first which seems to contradict the Delta's comments on the same subject. As if to make amends for the lack of reviews during the previous week, the Picayune printed an item in "Theatrical and Musical Chat" devoted to the Drews:

The Drews played through last week, though not to large, yet to most appreciative and highly delighted audiences, at Crisp's Gaiety. They have had the ill luck to make their debut upon the New Orleans stage in the very midst of the financial embarrassment which is just now deranging almost every kind of business, as well as theirs, and they have shared the common lot in consequence. But they will leave behind them on quitting us for the season, which they will do at the end of the week, the strong impression on the minds of all fair and judicious critics that they are both comedians of a very decided and undoubted talent, and actors whom it will ever give the theatre-goers of the Crescent City the greatest pleasure to welcome back again whenever, in better times, they may make it convenient to visit us.

The performances of Mrs. Drew have been of the elegant comedy school, though she has assumed a variety of parts not exactly in her line for the purpose of strengthening the casts in pieces in which her husband has played the leading ones.

Her Rosalind in "As You Like It" was a charming piece of acting, and we wish it could have been arranged so that we could have seen her Beatrice and Viola of Shakespeare, and in such parts as Lady Teazle. Her

120 Ibid., November 3, 1857.

Mrs. Ormsby Delmaine in the "Serious Family," the Duchess in "Ladies' Battle," and Nan in "Good for Nothing," and many other things in which we have seen her, have been beautifully acted and have stamped her the genuine artiste we have known her to be for years past. She is now in the full maturity of her highly cultivated powers, and is well worthy of the eminence she has achieved in her profession.

The same article had words of praise for Mr. Drew's work in comedy, and since few reviews of his acting have been noted, this one is included in this study:

Mr. Drew is a sterling comedian. Not only in the impersonation of the Irish characters, but in such parts as those of the clowns of Shakespeare, he has no superiors now on the stage. His Touchstone is a genuine piece of acting, embodying the very essence of the character as conceived by the great master. Mr. Drew's Irishmen are admirably distinct, the one from the other. His gentlemen are genteel, and his boors are not gentlemen. As Gerald Pepper in the "White Horse of the Peppers," he had an opportunity of making this contrast very striking by juxtaposition, and his Sir Patrick O'Flenipo may be cited as another illustration in proof of our remarks. These capital artists play a few nights longer, and then leave us for Mr. Crisp's Gaiety, in Memphis.¹²¹

The Picayune's opinion of the players was so different from that of the Delta in so many respects that one might almost think they had seen different performances. On this occasion the Delta commented: "To-night the Drews take a benefit. So far the engagement of these "stars" is a dead failure. We trust that they may be compensated on this occasion for the excessively bad houses which have assembled at the Gaiety for the past two weeks."¹²²

¹²¹ The Daily Picayune, November 3, 1857.

¹²² The Daily Delta, November 4, 1857.

Evidently the audiences did increase during the last performances. The Crescent reported that there was a "moderately good audience" at their benefit, and that Sir Patrick's Eve and The Conjugal Lesson "offered not a little entertainment." The reviewer said that he had never seen the Drews play better. According to his report, the bill was repeated on November 5 for "positively the last time." The Crescent writer urged his readers to "Go."¹²³

The Delta also commented upon the audience and said that there was "a marked increase in the size as well as the appreciative disposition of the audience on both the benefit night and the night before. The Delta reviewer reiterated his favorite theme that Drew was no "star," but said "in going out he sheds at least a sort of fire-fly radiance, such as is seen when 'the last rose of summer' breathes its dying perfume to the autumn wind."¹²⁴ After such a comment, it is indeed difficult to take this reviewer seriously.

Many years later, when Mrs. Drew revisited New Orleans, she recalled that the engagement in 1857 was "most successful."¹²⁵ Apparently by that time she had

¹²³ The New-Orleans Crescent, November 5, 1857.

¹²⁴ The Daily Delta, November 5, 1857.

¹²⁵ The Daily Picayune, March 27, 1894.

forgotten the small houses, and the disparaging remarks of the Delta reviewer.

The Drews opened in Memphis on November 18, and for nine days and a reengagement of six days, they repeated many of the same plays that they had acted in New Orleans. Some of the plays in which Drew had appeared without the assistance of Mrs. Drew were dropped for the Memphis engagement, and others in which she appeared were added. The plays which were substituted included: Paul Pry, Leap Year, An Object of Interest, Delicate Ground, Aline, and Betsy Baker. Mrs. Drew also made an appearance in Satan in Paris.¹²⁶

On the second night of the Drews' engagement, it was reported that the house was reasonably full. A review in the Daily Ledger seems to indicate that they were well received:

Mr. and Mrs. John Drew as William and Blackeyed Susan, called for the admiration of the audience. In the "Conjugal Lesson," a scene of merriment was enacted in the "Candle Style," which was new, entertaining and decidedly well done.

The reviewer indicated that the house was full, the best of the season on this occasion. He said also: "The many shouts of hearty laughter and the rapturous

¹²⁶ The Memphis Daily Ledger, Nov. 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 28, Dec. 3, 4, 5, 1857.
The Memphis Evening Ledger, Nov. 21, 25, 27, 30, Dec. 1, 2, 1857.

appkause which went up time and time again gave ample proof of the estimation in which this talented lady and gentleman are held by our play going community."¹²⁷

The last two nights of their engagement saw them sharing the stage with an English opera troupe.

The Drews may have had one or more additional engagements before they returned to Philadelphia, but this writer has no record of them.

In January, they became members of the Walnut Street Theatre Company, then managed by Mrs. D. P. Bowers, and played with her so-called "Great Star Company" until April 9. The record for this engagement is not as complete as it might be, for Mrs. Bowers' advertisements did not appear regularly.¹²⁸

Mrs. Drew appeared in The Knight of Arva, Married Life, The Irish Emigrant, and The Serious Family with her husband.

Early in February, Flowers of the Forest, a drama by Buckstone was presented with a cast that included Peter Richings.¹²⁹ Mrs. Drew was Lemuel in this production.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ The Memphis Daily Ledger, November 30, 1857.

¹²⁸ The Public Ledger, January 25-April 9, 1858.

¹²⁹ Miss Caroline Richings later became a well-known singer in English opera and headed her own company for many years.

¹³⁰ The Public Ledger, February 2, 1858.

Midsummer Night's Dream was another offering early in February, and fairies and mortals mingled on the Walnut stage for six successive nights. Mrs. Drew was Oberon, the fairy king, the first record of her appearance in the role. Theatregoers were probably not too much surprised to find Drew in the role of Bottom.¹³¹

For her benefit in March, Mrs. Drew appeared in another Shakespearian play, Love's Labors Lost. Her role was not named in the advertisement, but it is probable that she played Rosaline.¹³²

On April 9, a farewell benefit for Mr. and Mrs. Drew was announced "for most positively their last appearance in Philadelphia this season." The play presented was John Bull. Mrs. Drew was Lady Caroline Braymore and Drew was Dennis Brulgruddery, roles which both had played before. Drew was seen in His Last Legs for the afterpiece.¹³³

During the Drows' attachment to the Walnut Street Company, Mrs. Drew also is known to have appeared in The Belle's Stratagem, Love and Charity, The Jealous Wife, and The Robber's Wife.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Ibid., February 8, 1848.

¹³² Ibid., March 19, 1858.

¹³³ Ibid., April 9, 1858.

¹³⁴ Ibid., January 25, 1857-April 9, 1858.

Apparently the Drows resumed their tour after this engagement in Philadelphia, for they seemingly did not appear in the Quaker City again until the next season.

William Wheatley, after several years of operation of the Arch Street Theatre as sole lessee, formed a partnership with J. S. Clarke,¹³⁵ and it was under the Wheatley and Clarke banner that Mrs. Drew was to return to the Arch Street Theatre in 1858.

The two proprietors assembled a stock company which was said to have been one of the best ever organized in America.¹³⁶ It included Mrs. Drew, Georgiana Kinlock, Emma Taylor, John Dolman, L. R. Shewell, Mr. and Mrs. John Gilbert, Mr. and Mrs. E. N. Thayer, John E. McCullough, and the lessees, Wheatley and Clarke. W. S. Fredericks, the stage manager, also occasionally acted with the company.¹³⁷

In addition to newspaper advertisements, an almost complete collection of playbills for the season is extant.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ John Sleeper Clarke (1833-1899) was a very popular comedian in Philadelphia. He also achieved success in England as a comedian and theatre manager, and in later years, he and his brother-in-law, Edwin Booth, purchased and operated the Walnut Street Theatre with notable success.

¹³⁶ Brown, "Mrs. John Drew," p. 130.

¹³⁷ The Public Ledger, August 13, 1858 listed the members of the company.

¹³⁸ Wheatley and Clarke's Arch Street Theatre Playbills, American Playbills, X, Rare Book Collection, University of Pennsylvania Library.

Thus the record of Mrs. Drew's appearances for this season is more nearly complete than for any season to date.

The opening production on August 14 was Sheridan's comedy, The Rivals. The strong cast included Mrs. Drew as Lydia Languish, Miss Kinlock as Lucy, Wheatley as Captain Absolute, Gilbert as Sir Anthony Absolute, Dolman as Falkland, Clarke as Acres, Shewell as Sir Lucius O'Trigger, Mrs. Gilbert as Mrs. Malaprop, Miss Taylor as Julia, and McCullough as the coachman.¹³⁹

Although this theatre was operated as a stock company most of the season, Mr. and Mrs. James W. Wallack, Jr. made some appearances in February and March while Wheatley and Clarke absented themselves from the company to play a six-weeks' engagement in Baltimore and Richmond.¹⁴⁰

During the engagement of the Wallacks, Mrs. Drew was Juliet in a production of Romeo and Juliet in which Mrs. Wallack played Romeo and Wallack Mercutio. Apparently the desire of actresses to play this Shakespearean hero had not yet abated. Mrs. Drew also appeared in the roles of Ophelia, Desdemona, Cordelia, Virginia, Julie de Mortimer, and young Norval, all roles that she had played many times

¹³⁹ Ibid. See playbill dated August 14, 1858.

¹⁴⁰ The Public Ledger, February 19-April 1, 1859.

before, and as Pauline in The Winter's Tale, Hortense in The Huron Chief, and Hortense de Pierpont in The Iron Chest, all new roles apparently.¹⁴¹

Louisa Drew repeated several Shakespearean roles during the season, namely, Lady Percy in Henry IV, Mrs. Ford in The Merry Wives of Windsor, Adriana in The Comedy of Errors. She also played two other new roles, Julia in Two Gentlemen of Verona, and Imogen in Cymbeline.¹⁴² Years later when asked about her favorite role in tragedy, Mrs. Drew replied:

Well, now, it would be hard for me to say which tragical character pleased me best. I always had a fondness for the character of Pauline in the "Lady of Lyons" and Imogen in Shakespeare's "Cymbeline." But I never regarded tragedy as my forte, though I played it whenever called on, and to the leading actors of the day.¹⁴³

Cymbeline was performed twice during the season, once on Mrs. Drew's benefit, February 15, and again the following evening. She played Julia one night, October 15. Pauline, the other new Shakespearean role, was played five times.¹⁴⁴

Of the more than twenty roles, which were new to Mrs. Drew this season, one was noteworthy because of the

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid., October 30, 1858, January 19, February 15, 16, May 7, 13, 1859.

¹⁴³ The Daily Picayune, March 27, 1894.

¹⁴⁴ The Public Ledger, March 14-18, 1859.

number of times it was played. That was the role of Florence Trenchard in Tom Taylor's Our American Cousin. Clarke was Asa Trenchard. The play opened in Philadelphia November 22 while the New York production was in its sixth week, and remained on the boards through January 17. Clarke became ill and the play was withdrawn until January 31. This time it played through February 14, the seventy-sixth performance. On February 16, the play was given at a special matinee to aid the fund for purchasing the freedom of Bob Butt, the "heroic slave of Portsmouth, Virginia and his family." Our American Cousin was given another presentation on February 18, and then withdrawn until April 2, when it began another run that lasted through April 15. It was revived again April 26 and May 5 making a total of ninety-four performances of the play during the first season. The playbill for April 9, the eighty-sixth performance of the play, stated that over 125,000 people had already seen it.¹⁴⁵

Pauvrette, another new play in which Mrs. Drew had the title role, played three weeks,¹⁴⁶ while a revival of an old play The Clandestine Marriage had a run

¹⁴⁵ See Wheatley and Clarke's Arch Street Theatre Playbills for the dates indicated.

¹⁴⁶ The Public Ledger, November 1-20, 1858.

of six days and played six more performances during the season.¹⁴⁷

A variety of entertainment was offered for Mrs. Drew's second benefit on May 6. She appeared as Portia in the "Trial Scene" from The Merchant of Venice, as Lady Gay Spanker in the third act of London Assurance, as Lady Teazle in the "Screen Scene" from The School for Scandal, and acted in the fifth act of The Jealous Wife. Also on the program were Kate Nagle as Hubert in the fourth act of King John, and Clarke in one of his favorite comedy pieces, Seth Slope.¹⁴⁸

When the season closed, Mrs. Drew could count more than eighty different roles to her credit.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., August 28-September 3, 8, 17, 24, October 1, 6, 1858, January 18, 1859.

¹⁴⁸ Wheatley and Clarke's Arch Street Theatre Playbill, May 6, 1859.

¹⁴⁹ The Public Ledger, August 13, 1858-May 30, 1859 and/or Wheatley and Clarke's Arch Street Theatre Playbills note that she appeared in the following-named roles, as well as those already mentioned: Nancy Sykes (Oliver Twist), Nelly Nab (One Coat for Two Suits), Mrs. Henry Dove (Married Life), Bizarre (The Inconstant), Miss Peggy (The Country Girl), Emily Tempest (The Wheel of Fortune), Amelia Morris (Americans in Paris), Udigo (Charles XII), Alice (The Wreck Ashore), Mme. de Verpre (The Widow's Husband), Julia Everst (Fast Folks), Bob Nettles (Bob Nettles), Neil Caverly (Senor Valiente), Mrs. Mangle (Dying for Love), Meg (The Willow Copse), and an unidentified role in A Bird in the Hand Is Worth Two in the Bush. Other plays in which she appeared include: An Alarming Sacrifice, The Road to Ruin, Love, The Hunchback, She Stoops to Conquer, Satan in Paris, She Would and She Would Not, Speed the Plough, Two Loves and A Life, The Soldier's Daughter, Sketches in India, A Roland for an Oliver, Naval Engagements, Paul Fry, The Hypocrite, Money, The Honeymoon, Wives as They Were and Maids as They Are,
(Continued)

In December of this season, John Drew left Philadelphia for a tour which included California, Australia, England and Ireland. A farewell complimentary benefit was given for him at the Walnut Street Theatre where he had been playing prior to his departure.¹⁵⁰ His sister-in-law, Georgiana Kinlock and his daughter, Louise, age seven, accompanied him on the tour.¹⁵¹ Rather than make another tour, Mrs. Drew decided to remain in Philadelphia and pursue her career as a stock actress.

When the 1859-60 season opened at Wheatley and Clarke's Arch Street Theatre on August 15, Louisa Drew was again with the company and was seen in the role of Mrs. Ferment in the opening production, The School of Reform, or How to Rule a Husband.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ (Continued) The Poor Gentleman, The Heir at Law, The West Indian, Laugh When You Can, Simpson and Co., Aladdin, Masks and Faces, Werner, Still Waters Run Deep, The Dramatist, The King of the Commons, Cousin Cherry, Black-Eyed Susan, The Maid of Munster, Giralda, Wild Oats, Victorine, Follies of a Night, The Two Friends, The Wedding Day, Jonathan Bradford, Delicate Ground, John Bull, Warlock of the Glen, Old Heads and Young Hearts, The Married Hake, Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady, The Pride of Market, Tom and Jerry, or Life in London, and Douglas.

¹⁵⁰ The Public Ledger, December 4, 1858.

¹⁵¹ John Drew, My Years on the Stage (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., c. 1922), p. 23.

¹⁵² The Public Ledger, August 15, 1859.

Again this season most of the plays were produced using the strength of the regular stock company which was little changed from the previous season. Two visiting stars made appearances, however, John Collins, the Irish comedian, and Edwin Booth.¹⁵³

In addition to newspaper advertisements for the season, there is extant an almost complete set of Lorgnette, a four-page folder which seemed to serve as a program for Wheatley and Clarke's Arch Street Theatre. It contained the program for the day, news of plays and players, and in some instances, reprints of reviews from newspapers.¹⁵⁴

During Booth's first engagement which began August 27, and lasted through September 24, Mrs. Drew was the actor's leading lady in both comedy and tragedy. In Shakespearean plays she was Lady Macbeth, Queen Gertrude, Queen Elizabeth, Cordelia, Juliet, Portia, Beatrice, Emilia, and Katharine. She also played Julie de Mortimer in Richelieu, Florinda in Pescara, and Tullia in Brutus.

¹⁵³ Edwin Booth (1833-1893) American actor was the son of Junius Brutus Booth and brother of the infamous John Wilkes Booth. He made his debut in Richard III at the Boston Museum in 1849. He won great success as a Shakespearean actor and once played Hamlet for one hundred nights. He managed theatres, including Booth's Theatre in New York with varying degrees of success. Booth was also the founder of the Players' Club.

¹⁵⁴ Wheatley and Clarke's Lorgnette, Pennsylvania Historical Society, hereafter referred to as Lorgnette.

When Booth returned in May, she repeated some of the same roles and was also seen as Amelia in The Robbers and Mari-tana in Don Caesar de Bazan.¹⁵⁵

Of the new roles which Mrs. Drew undertook this season, the role of Zoe in Dion Boucicault's The Octoroon, or Life in Louisiana probably excited the most comment. This controversial play, which was received with mixed reactions in the tense period before the Civil War, played four weeks in February and March. Then it was closed for a week while John Collins fulfilled an engagement and was brought back for a week after he departed. It received one further production in May.¹⁵⁶

Apparently the Philadelphia press was well pleased with Mrs. Drew's interpretation of the octoroon, for the following comments were made in regard to her acting of the role and reprinted in Lorgnette:

Mrs. Drew's Zoe is a most beautiful impersonation, gentle, refined, pathetic! What dignity and grace is required in the scene at the slave sale. In the very same position in which the other slaves were ludicrous and provoked laughter, Mrs. Drew inspired respect and tenderest pity, drawing tears from all who gazed on her. All through, from first to last, this lady was admirable.

Sunday Transcript

¹⁵⁵ Lorgnette, August 27-September 24, 1859 and May 9-23, 1860.

¹⁵⁶ The Public Ledger, February 12-March 10, March 26-31, May 1, 1860.

Mrs. Drew invests the character of Zoe with real tenderness, and thoroughly elicits the sympathies.

Sunday Mercury

Mrs. Drew and Miss Taylor are both good, and the former deserves especial praise for keeping down the extravagance of her part.

Evening Journal

Zoe is, in the hands of Mrs. John Drew, one of those personations which instinctively drew sympathy.

Mrs. Drew's personation of this character was perfect in conception and delineation.

Sunday Dispatch

The modest, timid, loving Zoe, by Mrs. Drew, is something worthy of her mind, heart, reputation, and which this superior actress displays to admiration.

The Sporting Chronicle¹⁵⁷

A second new play of Boucicault's, Colleen Bawn, closed the season. Boucicault appeared in the production in the role of Myles-na-Coppaleen. Miss Taylor was Eily O'Connor, the Colleen Bawn, and Mrs. Drew was Anne Chute, the Colleen Duadh. The play opened May 24 and ran through the close of the season, June 9.¹⁵⁸ The Public Ledger reported that Mrs. Drew was "the very personation of an educated and sprightly lady" in this play.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Lorgnette, February 22, 1860.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., May 24-June 9, 1860.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., June 9, 1860.

Earlier in the season, Mrs. Drew played the leading role in another Boucicault play, Dot, a dramatization of Dickens' The Cricket on the Hearth. It opened October 17, was acted through November 18, and was given three more performances the following month.¹⁶⁰ Lorgnette included a review from the New York Tribune which discussed Mrs. Drew's playing of the title role:

"Dot" is admirably played by Mrs. John Drew, whose performance is not marred by the dialect, and the disposition to make low comedy points, which disfigured certain scenes of Miss Agnes Robertson.¹⁶¹

Another new role of Mrs. Drew's during the season which brought favorable reports from the dramatic reviewers was that of Mrs. Featherly in Everybody's Friend:

Mrs. Drew made the simple domestic wife quite fascinating.

The Sunday Transcript

Mrs. Drew as Mrs. Featherly is admirable.

The Daily News

The leading characters are sustained by Messrs. Wheatley and Clarke and Mrs. John Drew and Miss Emma Taylor, and all are excellent.

The Pennsylvania Inquirer

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., October 17-November 18, December 3, 16, 17, 1859.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., October 25, 1859.

Mrs. Drew and Miss Taylor were excellent in their respective characters.

The Public Ledger

The parts are capitally played by Messrs. Wheatley, Dolman, Clarke, Mrs. Drew, Miss Taylor, and Miss Stoneall. . . . The little which Mrs. Drew and Miss Taylor have to do, is accomplished with their usual excellence.

The Sunday Dispatch

Mrs. Drew is as good in Mrs. Featherly as she is in everything else, and makes more of the character than we ever supposed possible.¹⁶²

Everybody's Friend opened on Christmas Eve for a single performance, then on January 9 began a run which lasted through January 28. It was given at least seven more performances during the remainder of the season.¹⁶³

The Romance of a Poor Young Man was produced at the Arch when it was in its fourth month at Wallack's in New York. Mrs. Drew played the part of Marguerite Laroque in the Philadelphia production.¹⁶⁴ The Sunday Transcript stated: "Mrs. John Drew, as the haughty heiress, as she always does, reads the character aright, and plays it with her usual excellence."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Ibid., January 18, 1860.

¹⁶³ Ibid., December 24, 1859, January 9-28, February 10, 11, April 4, 5, May 3, 1860.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., April 9-28, 1860.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., April 18, 1860.

Mrs. Drew played several other new roles during the season and also acted in some revivals. One of the most interesting of the latter group was a production of Peter Wilkins, or the Flying Islanders.¹⁶⁶ Mrs. Drew played the title role which she had first played some twenty years earlier. The Philadelphia Press commented that Mrs. Drew played the part of the boy with more grace than any female actor they then had in the city.¹⁶⁷

This season was marked by longer runs of individual plays than any previous season. Despite this fact, Mrs. Drew managed to appear in more than fifty different roles.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., December 26, 1859-January 19, 1860.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., January 2, 1860.

¹⁶⁸ The Public Ledger, August 15, 1859-June 9, 1860 and/or Lorgnette note that she appeared in the following-named roles as well as those already mentioned: Narramattah (The Wept-of-the-Wish-ton-Wish), Miami (Green Bushes), Rose Fielding (The Willow Copse), Mrs. Smylie (Nine Points of the Law), Countess of Lovelaugh (Fast Men of Olden Times), Clara (Matrimony), Constance Belmore (One Touch of Nature), and Mrs. Wardour (The House or the Home). She also appeared in: London Assurance, Wild Oats, The Pride of the Market, Our American Cousin, The Irish Ambassador, Warlock of the Glen, A Day After the Wedding, The Rivals, The Married Rake, The Dramatist, Single Life, Married Life, Leap Year, The Hypocrite, Awkward Arrival, The Hunchback, Delicate Ground, Love, One Coat for Two Suits, The Soldier of Fortune, and Paul Fry.

The 1860-61 season, the last one of the Arch Street Theatre under the management of Wheatley and Clarke, was inaugurated on August 18 with the well-known old play, The Heir at Law. Mrs. Drew was seen in a role which she had played many times before, that of Cecily Homespun.¹⁶⁹

There were several changes in policy this season. Saturday matinee performances were begun, but Mrs. Drew seems not to have appeared in them. Also, more stars appeared this season than in previous seasons although the company was still billed as the "Star Company" and was responsible for most of the theatre's offerings.

Edwin Booth made two appearances this season in his brother-in-law's theatre and Mrs. Drew again played Portia, Julie De Mortimer, Queen Gertrude, Emelia, and Katharine with him. During his engagement, she also played Portia in Julius Caesar, Francesca Bentivoglio in The Fool's Revenge, and Marian in Wallace, the Hero of Scotland.¹⁷⁰

After finishing an engagement with Edwin Booth at the Academy of Music, which was under Wheatley and Clarke's management this season, Charlotte Cushman moved over to the Arch Street Theatre for an engagement.

¹⁶⁹ The Philadelphia Inquirer, August 18, 1860, hereafter cited as the Inquirer.

¹⁷⁰ The Inquirer, October 31-November 18, 1860 and April 8-13, 1861. See also Lorgnette, 1860-61, Rare Book Collection, University of Pennsylvania Library.

Miss Cushman, who twenty-five years before had made her debut as a tragic actress at the first St. Charles Street Theatre, New Orleans when both she and Mrs. Drew were members of the same company, had become recognized as America's leading tragedienne. During this engagement at the Arch, the two actresses again played together, this time in Hamlet and Henry VIII. Miss Cushman, who probably gained greater success in the portrayal of masculine roles in Shakespearean plays than any of her feminine contemporaries, was seen as Hamlet and Cardinal Wolsey. Mrs. Drew played Queen Gertrude and Queen Katherine.¹⁷¹

Several stars of lesser importance, Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Florence, Mrs. D. P. Bowers, and Charles Dillon made appearances.¹⁷² During Dillon's engagement, Mrs. Drew played Madeline in Belphegor, a play in which Dillon was said to have appeared for 300 consecutive nights in London. Also during his engagement, she played Queen Anne of Austria in The King's Musketeers and Lillian Trevor in The Hard Struggle. After the production of the last-named play, the Inquirer commented upon Mrs. Drew's

¹⁷¹ The Inquirer and Lorgnette, January 24, 28, 30, February 1, 2, 1861.

¹⁷² The Inquirer, September 3-22, 1860 (Mr. and Mrs. Florence), February 4-14 (Mrs. Bowers), March 11-April 6, 1861 (Dillon).

performance of the role and her acting on other occasions:

... The author J. Westland Marston has left much to be done by the hero and heroine in the expression which is to be worked by those who represent the characters. He is fortunate in having had two artists in these roles--Mr. Charles Dillon and Mrs. John Drew. Courtesy demands that we notice the lady first. Never have we seen her to better advantage. The subdued and natural style in which she represented "Lillian Trevor" makes us wonder that she should ever depart from a quiet and unobtrusive utterance for the more boisterous declamation that sometimes mars her performances. MRS. DREW may regard her performance last night as second to nothing that has distinguished her since, when a child, she impersonated important characters at the Washington Gardens, in Boston--where she was as popular as she is now.¹⁷³

This criticism is somewhat reminiscent of that made by the Albion critic of almost twenty years before, although the Inquirer did not state specifically that her fault lay in a failure to portray serious roles naturally.

In addition to supporting visiting players, Mrs. Drew played several new roles in company productions and also took roles in several revivals, making a total of more than sixty different roles for the season.¹⁷⁴ For

¹⁷³ Ibid., March 27, 1861.

¹⁷⁴ The Inquirer, August 18, 1860-May 11, 1861 and/or Lorgnette note that she appeared in the following roles: Virginia Pate (Vanity Fair), Mrs. Honeybun (Election), Jacques Renaud (The Monkey Boy), Eve Hillington (Lonely Man of the Ocean), Laura Fairlie (Woman in White), Countess of Tresillion (The Dowager), Mrs. Herbert Waverly (Playing With Fire), Bianca Colonna (Romantic Incident in the Life of Sixtus V), Lady Amaranthe Allville (School for Coquettes), as well as those already mentioned. She also acted in: Valentine and Orson, Wild Oats, One Coat for Two Suits, Cousin Cherry, The Hunchback, Jane Shore, Giralda, Gilderoy, The Wonder, Don Caesar de Bazan, Virginus, Delicate Ground,

(Continued)

her benefit, she was Madame de Fantanges in Plot and Passion and Kate Plowden in The Pilot.¹⁷⁵

The season of 1860-61 was one of tension because of the national situation. The newspapers were filled with news of the impending great conflict. Fort Sumter was fired upon April 15 during Booth's second engagement. The Arch's final production of the season was a war play called The Wars of Napoleon. The piece was divided into four epochs, the Conscription, Crossing the Alps, The Battle of Wagram, and the Burning of Moscow. Separate cast lists were named for each epoch. Mrs. Drew was Loulou Bomshell. In the second epoch, a character named Petit Tattoo, Chief Drummer of the 2d Battalion may also have been taken by Mrs. Drew. Lorgnette named the player as Mr. John Drew, but Drew was not yet back from his tour. This writer could find no evidence that the young John Drew,

¹⁷⁴ (Continued) A Roland for an Oliver, The Carpenter of Rouen, The Belle's Stratagem, Married Life, Leap Year, Bob Nettles, The Naiad Queen, The Married Rake, Black Eyed Susan, Everybody's Friend, Our American Cousin, Paul Pry, The Irish Lion, Dombey and Son, The Willow Copse, The Marble Heart, The Ladies' Battle, The Robbers, Rural Felicity, Werner, Town and Country, The Serious Family, As You Like It, and Colleen Bawn.

¹⁷⁵ Lorgnette, April 17, 1861.

who was about eight at this time, ever made an appearance at such an early age. It is probably an error in the printing.¹⁷⁶

On May 2, Wheatley and Clarke donated the Academy of Music for a benefit given for the "LONE MOTHERS AND WIDOWS OF THE VOLUNTEER'S RELIEF FUND." Players from the Arch and from Mrs. M. E. Garrettson's Walnut Street Theatre volunteered to appear. The Arch presented The Rough Diamond, in which Mrs. Drew appeared as Margery, and the Walnut contributed The Soldier's Daughter. Mrs. Gladstone delivered a patriotic address, and E. A. Sothern appeared in Mr. Sothern in a Fix. An orchestra played and the program was concluded with a performance by some Indian vocalists.¹⁷⁷

Wheatley and Clarke dissolved partnership at the end of the season to go their separate ways. Wheatley later became owner and manager of Niblo's Garden and in 1866 produced The Black Crook, America's first successful musical revue. Clarke pursued his career as a comedian, both in this country and in England, and later became part owner and manager of the Walnut Street Theatre. During the summer, Mrs. Drew took over the lease of the Arch Street Theatre, and in so doing, began a new phase of her

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., April 29, 1861.

¹⁷⁷ The Inquirer, May 2, 1861.

career in the American theatre. At this time she could look back upon more than forty years of playing in theatres managed by other people.¹⁷⁸ These years, however, gave her good experience for her new position, for she had worked under both successful and unsuccessful managers in many parts of the country during both prosperous times and periods of depression. She had also had the opportunity to work with her husband when he succeeded in his managerial efforts in Philadelphia, as well as when he failed. Mrs. Drew had spent much time in Philadelphia, including most of the decade preceding her acceptance of the lease at the Arch Street Theatre, and was well acquainted with the theatrical business of the Quaker City. As a versatile player and one who had long been associated with the theatre, she knew the "literature and less" that aroused audience responses and she knew production techniques. As an actress she had played with the most distinguished players of the day and had gained a reputation as a child prodigy who had grown into a successful adult player. Although some people may have looked askance at the Arch

¹⁷⁸ Among the managers under whom she played in this country were: Joe Cowell, Francis C. Wemyss, Charles Gilfert, Edmund Simpson, William Pelby, Thomas S. Hamblin, J. H. Caldwell, James Thorne, William Dinneford, Cornelius Logan, John B. Rice, Noah M. Ludlow, Sol Smith, W. H. Crisp, Lewis T. Pratt, Thomas J. Hemphill, E. A. Marshall, James Quinlan, John Drew, William Wheatley, Mrs. D. P. Bowers, and J. S. Clarke.

Street Company stockholders for entrusting the fortunes of their theatre to a woman, there were doubtless few who would not have agreed that by virtue of her experience in the theatre, she was well qualified to handle the position. The stockholders, too, must have recognized personal qualities possessed by the actress which would make it possible for her to meet the demands of the situation. At any event, for a number of years, they must have been well pleased with the former stock actress who became a successful theatre manager.

CHAPTER VI

ACTRESS-MANAGER, STOCK COMPANY THEATRE (1861-1862)

The thirty-one-year-old Arch Street Theatre had not always brought financial rewards to the long list of managers, who had sought to make it a successful business before Mrs. Drew took it over. William B. Wood, who opened the house October 1, 1828, was financially ruined less than three months after the theatre was opened.¹ After Wood closed the theatre, it was opened again by a manager, who is now known only as Roberts, and remained open only a week. Aaron J. Phillips took the house during the summer, and under his management, Edwin Forrest made his first appearance in the theatre. In June, 1831, there was a struggle between the Chestnut and the Arch for the right to introduce a trained elephant. The dispute was argued in court, and the Arch won the dubious honor of presenting "her elephantine

¹ The Arch had been built by some New York promoters who were of the opinion that Philadelphia was able to support two theatres. The Chestnut Street Theatre was the leading theatre, and the Walnut was closed and was to be torn down presumably. Before the Arch was completed, the promoters found to their dismay that the Walnut was being rebuilt, that is, it was being converted from an arena into a theatre. The reconverted Walnut was not successful and was closed again in November, 1827.

highness, Mlle. D'Jick." Later in the year, William Jones, William Duffy, and William Forrest (brother of Edwin Forrest) obtained a lease and the theatre seems to have been fairly successful with its company of American actors until Forrest's death in 1834. Then the theatre was again on the market. The managers of the Chestnut, Robert Maywood, H. H. Rowbotham, and Lewis T. Pratt, believed that it would be well to keep the house out of competition, so they leased it and kept it dark almost six years. Then for the next four years, the theatre was managed by Francis C. Wemyss, Blake and Jones, William Dinneford, Charles S. Porter Porter and Pratt, Thomas B. Russell, and William Deverna in succession. According to one historian, they all found the Arch "a morgue for theatrical hopes."

William E. Burton took over the house in June, 1844, and remained six seasons, a record up to that time. He was on the verge of financial collapse when in May, 1848, he introduced a piece called A Glance at Philadelphia, which had several characters regarded as portraits of half the audience. It turned the tide of fortune, paid his debts, and put \$10,000 in his pockets. With this sum, Burton leased Palmo's Opera House in New York and retired from management in Philadelphia.

E. S. Conner followed Burton and struggled two years to succeed, but is said to have failed because he

attempted to star himself and his wife in productions. They were good players but not great actors, and audiences probably grew tired of them.

Thomas J. Hemphill took over the theatre in 1852, and the house was renovated, the pit being transformed into a parquet. After one season, Hemphill gave up the lease and William Wheatley and John Drew took it over. They were successful, as has already been reported, but the partnership was dissolved after two years. Wheatley ran the theatre alone for two years, then took J. S. Clarke into partnership, and for a time they attempted to operate both the Arch and the Academy of Music. After two seasons together at the Arch, Wheatley and Clarke went separate ways, and the theatre was again without a lessee.² The stockholders requested Mrs. John Drew to take over the lease, and she became the manager at the beginning of the 1861-62 season and remained in that position until the close of the 1891-92 season.³

Mrs. Drew was not the first woman to manage a theatre in Philadelphia. But the first two were said to have been managers in name only. In 1842, during a period of keen rivalry between the Chestnut and the Walnut Street

² Joseph Jackson, Encyclopedia of Philadelphia (Harrisburg: The National Historical Association, Telegraph Press, 1931), I, 100-111.

³ Autobiographical Sketch, pp. 110, 125.

Theatres, Miss Mary Elizabeth Maywood was announced as the manager of the Chestnut Street house for the season. Not to be outdone by the novelty of having a woman manager, the Walnut Street Theatre began billing their leading lady, Miss Charlotte Cushman, as the manager. One Philadelphia historian wrote that "they probably were the first instances of actress managers"⁴ and from all that can be learned of their experiments, they must have been regarded more or less as jokes."⁵ Two women who took over managerial duties in Philadelphia at a later date seemed to have had some success. They were Mrs. D. P. Bowers, who was at the Walnut for nearly two years, and Mrs. Mary Ann Garrettson, who followed her at the same theatre, and who was still the manager of that house when Mrs. Drew took over the Arch Street Theatre.⁶

Brown reported that when Mrs. Drew assumed the management of this theatre, the property had depreciated greatly and was mortgaged to the amount of twenty thousand dollars. However, under her management, the theatre prospered greatly, the mortgage was quickly paid off, and

⁴ They may have been the first in this country, but they were certainly not the first in the world. Mme. Vestris in England was one who preceded them.

⁵ Jackson, IV, 1163.

⁶ Ibid., IV, 1164.

a surplus was left for the stockholders. The stock, which had had a par value of five hundred dollars a share, under her management reached a value of seven hundred and eighty dollars, and could not even then be purchased except upon the death of a stockholder.⁷ Mrs. Drew's financial success was not immediate, however, for the first season she had to borrow money each week to meet the salaries.⁸

Before the season opened, an announcement appeared in an advertisement for the Arch Street Theatre, which was to be called for many years "Mrs. John Drew's Arch Street Theatre:"

MRS. DREW

In assuming the Lesseeship and Direction of this
POPULAR ESTABLISHMENT

Trusts she may with confidence hope, from the Friends and Patrons of the Arch, and the Philadelphia public generally a continuance of that kind favor which has been so liberally extended towards her in her capacity of Artiste; and respectfully informs them that the Theatre, after having undergone most important alterations and improvements, both before and behind the Curtain, will open for the Fall and Winter Season ON
SATURDAY EVENING August 31, 1861.

The announcement also called attention to the alterations and improvements, which were "of the most advantageous and ornamental description, greatly enhancing the comfort of the audience," and to the "masters of the various crafts" who effected them. It mentions new seats

⁷ Brown, "Mrs. John Drew," p. 131.

⁸ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 110.

throughout the theatre, new upholstering and curtain hanging, painting and decorating, chandeliers and gas fittings, a new ventilator over the dome "producing a constant and agreeable coolness in the atmosphere of the Theatre," a new and splendid drop curtain, entirely new wardrobe, new furniture, new appointments and properties, and new machinery.

The announcement had the following to say about the players:

With a company of Artistes in the selection of which no expense nor trouble has been spared and which will embrace the services of many old established favorites, together with a number of new aspirants for public consideration, the whole constituting a Stock Company worthy, it is hoped, to constitute what the Arch is intended to be by the Lessee--a first-class Theatre. . . .

The following Artistes are engaged for the Season, and are respectfully submitted to the consideration of the public:--MISS CHARLOTTE THOMPSON, from Wallack's Theatre, New York, and Varieties, New Orleans. MRS. CHARLES HENRI, from the London Theatres. MISS MARY WELLS, MRS. STONEALL, MRS. HACKURT, from the Walnut Street Theatre. MISS EMMA TAYLOR, MISS ELIZABETH PRICE, MISS CHARLOTTE ADAMS, from Laura Keane's Theatre. MISS HACKURT, MISS MILLER, MISS SUMMERFIELD, MISS ST. AUBIN, MISS JANE RUSSEL [sic], MISS M. A. GRIFFITH and MRS. JOHN DREW

MR. JOHN GILBERT, MR. SHEWELL, MR. J. K. MORTIMER, late of Burton's Theatre, New York. MR. WM. R. LEAK from the Baltimore and Cincinnati Theatres, MR. WM. SCALLAN, from the St. Charles Theatre, New Orleans, MR. FRANK DREW, his first appearance here in four years, MR. F. K. RINGGOLD from the Boston Theatres, MR. CHARLES HENRI from the London Theatres, WILLIAM WALLIS, ALEX FISHER, ALFRED BEECHY, R. S. MANUEL, R. CRAIG, from the Winter Garden, WM. HESS, J. CURTIS, E. WILKS, S. D.

JOHNSON, MR. ELLIS and WM. S. FREDERICKS.⁹

The company must have been a capable one. Miss Thompson was a promising young actress who later became a star, and J. K. Mortimer was favored as a light comedian for a time. John Gilbert was a distinguished portrayer of comical old men and gained a reputation in this line in Boston and New York as well as Philadelphia. Miss Wells, who played old women in comedies, was also well known in several cities. Robert Craig, whom Mrs. Drew later described as "the most talented young man I ever met,"¹⁰ played comedy roles and wrote burlesques. Frank Drew, her brother-in-law, had gained a reputation for low comedy work, and with Craig supplied the audiences with some amusing absurdities. Mrs. Henri played light comedy roles, in fact, many of the same ones that Mrs. Drew had played herself. Henri directed dance sequences and tableaux. Some of the supporting players, Miss Price (who later became a star), Miss Taylor, Mrs. Stoneall, Shewell, and Wallis, to name a few, were capable actors.

Mrs. Drew very wisely retained important staff members, who doubtless had profited by the experience they

⁹ The Inquirer, August 29, 1861. The admission prices given were: Dress Circle 37½ cents, Parquet 50 cents, Family Circle 25 cents, Amphitheatre 15 cents, Private Boxes \$5 and \$3, Single seats in Orchestra and Private Boxes, 75 cents.

¹⁰ Autobiographical Sketch, August 29, 1861.

had gained in their respective positions in previous seasons. These included Joseph D. Murphy, treasurer, C. R. Dodworth, director of the orchestra, and William S. Frederick, stage manager.¹¹

The house was operated primarily as a stock company theatre, although Mrs. Drew's husband played a starring engagement of one hundred nights and another star, Miss Jane Coombs was booked later in the season. Miss Coombs, however did not complete her engagement because of Mr. Drew's untimely death.

The season opened with The School for Scandal, and Mrs. Drew appeared in one of her favorite roles, that of Lady Teazle.¹² Gilbert was Sir Peter Teazle, Leak played Joseph, and Mortimer acted Charles Surface. The second play was Aunt Charlotte's Maid with Scallan and Mrs. Henri. Additional attractions for the evening included a new national overture and an address by Mrs. Drew.¹³ According

¹¹ William S. Fredericks (real name Sheridan) was a nephew of James Sheridan Knowles, the playwright. According to reputation, Frederick was a very strict stage manager, and a very capable one. He had been at the Arch several years before the management. In fact, he had been godfather to Mrs. Drew's son, John Wheatley Sheridan Drew. See Drew, My Life on the Stage, p. 8.

¹² Many years later Mrs. Drew reported: "I clung to this part--after marriage giving up all young parts--in Philadelphia, because the public seemed to like to see it." See Autobiographical Sketch, p. 134. Mrs. Drew's statement was not accurate, however. She occasionally played other youthful roles until she gave up the stock company. Her last performance of Lady Teazle was in 1896, when she was seventy-six years old.

¹³ The Inquirer, August 31, 1861.

to the Inquirer's report, the opening was successful:

The manageress of the Arch had no reason to complain of the attendance on the opening night, as every foot of available room was occupied. The address of Mrs. DREW was listened to with interest. After an allusion to the origins and objects of the drama, she narrated her own experience on the mimic stage, and concluded with the expression of hope that her efforts to establish a first class theatre would be seconded by an appreciative public. She was loudly applauded, and the sterling old comedy of THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL followed.

The reception which was extended to old and tried favorites was very enthusiastic, while the criticism always bestowed upon new artists nerved them to the utmost. The result was a performance reflecting the highest credit on all concerned. New scenery, new dresses, and a close attention to all the details, characterized the rendition of THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL. The afterpiece of Aunt Charlotte's Maid was equally successful.¹⁴

Sheridan's play was repeated September 6, "in order to give to the hundreds who were disappointed on Saturday an opportunity of witnessing the grand combination of a new and strong cast, new scenery," according to a news item on that day. The same writer reported that there was continued success at "this pleasant establishment" and that another crowd was anticipated for the second performance of the play.¹⁵ A few days before, the same newspaper had reported that "another crowded and fashionable audience assembled at this favorite resort last night." This was on

¹⁴ Ibid., September 2, 1861.

¹⁵ Ibid., September 6, 1861.

the occasion of a presentation of Old Heads and Young Hearts and Lend Me Five Shillings. Mrs. Drew did not appear, but Miss Thompson was "warmly received" and it was predicted that she would become a great favorite. Frank Drew also received a hearty reception.¹⁶

Although Mrs. Drew was busy with managerial duties, she nevertheless appeared in forty-two different acting roles during the season. The large number of appearances served two purposes. First of all, she was by this time an actress of considerable reputation, particularly for her work in comedy, and she doubtless had a following in Philadelphia, the city in which she had been a leading stock actress for the last several years. Secondly, she probably felt that she could manage her theatre better if she worked closely with her company.

Early in the season Mrs. Drew took over some secondary roles in plays that featured Miss Thompson in the leading roles. In some instances, Mrs. Drew gave up parts she had played in previous seasons. Among these plays were The Way to Keep Him, Wives as They Were and Maids as They Are, The Belle's Stratagem, and Married Life.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid., September 3, 1861.

¹⁷ Ibid., October 12-November 30, 1861.

On one evening each actress appeared in a leading role in two different plays. Mrs. Drew was Juliana in The Honey-moon, and Miss Thompson was Mrs. Haller in The Stranger.¹⁸ Both had important roles in two old comedies that Mrs. Drew revived during the season, the first by Colman, the elder and Garrick was The Clandestine Marriage. Mrs. Drew was Miss Sterling and Miss Thompson Fanny.¹⁹ The play was given a second performance in order to raise money for the survivors of the disastrous fire at Wheatley's Continental Theatre.²⁰ The second old comedy was Colman's The School for

¹⁸ Ibid., September 14, 1861.

¹⁹ Ibid., September 16, 1861.

²⁰ Five days after Wheatley's new Continental Theatre opened on a spectacular production of The Tempest, a fire broke out in the dressing room of the ballet dancers. Panic ensued, and seven of the dancers were killed by the fire or by leaping from second-story dressing room windows. An investigation proved that the fire was caused by a ballet skirt coming in contact with an open gas flame as the skirt was being removed from its hanger in the dressing room. Wheatley was exonerated from blame in the affair, but as a result of the disaster, guards were put around the open lamps. Audiences seemed to find it difficult to forget the unfortunate accident, and Wheatley had to close the house before the end of the season. Immediately after the fire Wheatley's company gave a benefit for the survivors. Mrs. Garretson's Walnut Street Theatre Company presented Great Expectations and donated the night's receipts. Mrs. Drew's company played the above-mentioned play and was able to add over two hundred and eighty dollars to the fund, despite the fact that the most expensive single seat was seventy-five cents, and most of them ranged in price from fifteen cents in the amphitheatre to fifty cents in the parquet.

An account of the funeral of three of the dancers gives an interesting sidelight on the status of theatre people at this time. (Continued)

Grown Children. The Inquirer called this "the first representation in this city for many years" of this play and noted also:

It is one of the pieces that requires a very large company of competent artists to give full justice to the characters, hence it is so seldom performed; but the corps at the Arch being full and efficient, a treat of the highest dramatic order may be looked for, as every member of the company is in the cast.²¹

During the early part of the season Mrs. Drew appeared in several plays in which she took the feminine leading role. She was Lady Gay Spanker in London Assurance, Mrs. Oakley in The Jealous Wife, Hypolita in She Would and She Would Not, and Lady Townly in The Provoked Husband.²²

Either Mrs. Drew's acting of the last-named role had improved, or the Inquirer reviewer was more easily pleased than Durang, for Mrs. Drew received a good notice for her performance in the part:

The perfect performance of The Provoked Husband last night, at the Arch Street Theatre, deserved special notice. At the end of each act we could not avoid looking around the house to observe which of the old play-goers shared the pleasure with us of witnessing

²⁰ (Continued) At half-past three, a lengthy discourse and prayer were pronounced by Rev. Mr. Malcolm, Baptist minister unconnected, at present with any of our city churches. Both discourse and prayer were such as would be pronounced at any funeral. They contained no allusions to either the profession, the past careers, or the virtues of the deceased. See the Inquirer, September 14-21, 1861 for accounts of the fire.

²¹ Ibid., November 25, 1861.

²² Ibid., September 17-November 30, 1861.

the performance. Mrs. Drew deserves the liberal patronage of the public for the successful manner in which she is reproducing old English Comedy. Mrs. Drew's performance of "Lady Townly" was a graceful and perfect piece of art. The illusion was so perfect that Mrs. Drew was entirely forgotten--she was not that lady, but really "Lady Townly."²³

Mrs. Drew appeared in several new roles also in the early part of the season. She was Lady Restless in All in the Wrong, and Catharine Bright in Adventures of a Love Letter.²⁴

Miss Thompson was seen in many of the roles popular with leading ladies and stars at this time including Juliet, Lydia Languish, Clara Douglas, Pauline, Victorine, Agnes de Vere, Rose Redland, Miss Hardcastle, and the Widow Cheerly.²⁵ These were apparently well received, but the title role in a new play, Jeannette, brought forth special praise for the actress and the manager who staged the production. The play was described as one of those "peculiar French dramas depending for success upon strange and romantic situations, quick action and unexpected denouements." Its fifteen scenes were said to have been "masterpieces of the artists," and the music, which was entirely new,

²³ Ibid., November 20, 1861.

²⁴ Ibid., September 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 1861.

²⁵ Ibid., August 31-December 5, 1861.

included "a duet with chorus and anvil accompaniments."²⁶
 The play was in six acts and much time was spent in getting
 the piece ready for production.²⁷

Jeannette ran three weeks and was favorably received,
 if we are to judge by the comments in the Inquirer. After
 the first production, this newspaper commented:

The new play was received with every demonstration of
 delight by a crowded and fashionable audience of
 last night, and bids fair to have a very successful
 run. The scenery is magnificent, and the cast is
 very effective. . . . We do not have room to say more
 at present, but advise all to go and see Jeannette.²⁸

A few days later the same newspaper praised Mrs.
 Drew's work as manager in connection with this piece:

We are called upon once more to chronicle the signal
 and flattering success of one of our most eminent
 and talented ladies--Mrs. John Drew, an artiste of
 rare merit, she possesses, with her brilliant talents,
 a fine business tact and judgment almost unequalled,
 especially in the dramatic world, where she reigns an
 acknowledged peeress. This has been proved in the
 production of Jeannette, which, with its admirable
 cast of characters, and its judicious arrangement by
 the management has drawn full and enthusiastic
 audiences. The piece is full of absorbing interest,
 displaying the peculiar powers of the various members
 of this magnificent company in the most admirable manner.

²⁶ A letter, signed by Mrs. Drew, requesting permission to use anvils belonging to the Academy of Music, is extant and is in the Dreer Collection of Autographs of Actors, Singers, and Dancers, Vol. I, Pennsylvania Historical Society. The letter is dated September 17, 1861.

²⁷ The Inquirer, September 23, 1861.

²⁸ Ibid., September 24, 1861.

The reviewer went on to praise the acting of the individuals in some detail, and concluded with the following remarks on the staging:

The tableaux are exceedingly fine; the scenery surpassingly beautiful and well adapted to the piece, and the costumes picturesque, presenting a very imposing appearance. Altogether, it is really a fine piece. So far, even our numerous critics have been pleased thoroughly with it, and have not hesitated to express the same. And with such an advantage as this, rendered by people of the nicest discrimination, the fair lessee of the Arch has achieved a great triumph.²⁹

At the beginning of the second week, the Inquirer described some of the effects:

The performance of this evening will inaugurate the second week of Jeannette. The acting of Miss Thompson stamps her as a finished artist. The scenery of the drama has never yet received the notice which its merits deserve. Many of the effects are entirely new, never having been before attempted on the American stage. The sunset is natural; and the home of Smuggler in the mountains, is only equalled by the wild romance [sic] of the Devil's Peak. The Arch needs no other attraction for many weeks to come, having achieved a remarkable success.³⁰

On October 1, the day of the eighth presentation, the Inquirer urged the public not to "fail to go" and suggested that they would be "well repaid." A few days later the same newspaper said:

As usual, this beautiful drama is filling the house every night with our best citizens, and there is but one opinion expressed, and that is that, taken as a whole,

²⁹ Ibid., September 27, 1861.

³⁰ Ibid., September 30, 1861.

it is one of the best dramatic productions that our citizens have witnessed for years. From present appearances it bids fair to hold the stage at the Arch for weeks to come, and we congratulate Mrs. Drew upon her managerial success.³¹

Jeannette was withdrawn on October 12, even though it was still attracting crowds according to the Inquirer. Apparently Mrs. Drew had succeeded in arousing interest in her theatre with the spectacular production and then withdrew the piece.

West End, or, the Irish Heiress by Boucicault furnished the manager and her leading lady with the roles of Lady Daventry and Norah O'Connor. It played two nights.³²

Boucicault's play was withdrawn for Tom Taylor's Up in the Hills. This was advertised as the first production of the play in America. Miss Thompson was Monee, an "impulsive and lovely Indian," and Mrs. Drew was Mrs. Colonel McCann. A review, which appeared several days after the first presentation, called attention to the improbabilities of the plot and said that it "could have happened nowhere save in Tom Taylor's sketch of life in India."³³

Another play from the French was produced while Miss Thompson was with the company. It was another play of the sensational type and was written by Scribe, and was said to

³¹ Ibid., October 4, 1861.

³² Ibid., November 14, 15, 1861.

³³ Ibid., November 16-19, 1861. The review cited above appeared November 18.

have played over a hundred nights in Paris. Mrs. Drew was the Dowager Duchess Dorothy of Brunswick and Miss Thompson was the princess in this play that was given under the title of The Shiverer. After its first performance, the Inquirer reported:

The Shiverer--this comedy was a great success last evening, and was highly appreciated by the intelligent audience present. The scenery is very appropriate, the costumes superb, particularly those of the ladies, while the acting, taken as a whole, has never been surpassed on the Philadelphia stage. It will be repeated to-night with the same great cast.³⁴

A few days later the same newspaper reported that the production had made "a great sensation in dramatic circles." The writer said that it was "admirably performed by the great stock company at the Arch, and placed upon the stage in the superior manner that characterizes all the productions at this establishment."³⁵ Despite the enthusiasm of the reviewer, the play was withdrawn after four nights and did not appear again, possibly because Miss Thompson left the company soon after the date of the last performance, December 5.

A new play, presented for the first time in America, entitled The House on the Bridge of Notre Dame, received an exciting production, and Mrs. Drew was seen in a dual

³⁴ Ibid., December 2-5. The review cited above appeared December 3.

³⁵ Ibid., December 5, 1861.

role, Ernest de le Garde and Lambara, a gipsy. An announcement of the production stated:

After many weeks of careful preparation, this grand drama will be presented for the first time in America tonight. The cast contains the names of all the ladies and gentlemen of the company. The scenery, by Hayes, is said to be very beautiful. The costumes are all entirely new, and the mechanical effects are described as something out of the usual order of stage tricks. Among the most noticeable is a fine two-story dwelling house with two rooms on each floor, completely furnished, in which a great deal of action takes place. It will undoubtedly have a fine run.³⁶

A review of the production reported that Mrs. Drew, in the double characters of the legitimate and illegitimate brothers, was admirable. He also said that "the changes of apparel were effected with celerity, and the distinctions carefully retained." He also pronounced the house on the bridge where Zoe recognized the counterfeit Ernest, as "the finest scenic effect" he had ever witnessed upon the Philadelphia stage.³⁷ The reviewer's prophecy about the play's having a good run was correct. It stayed on the boards through November 13, and continued to have good notices. The scenery must, indeed, have been impressive:

In the point of scenery, no finer work has ever been placed upon the Philadelphia stage, the house being a perfect facsimile of those of the period. The romantic interest of the plot is maintained

³⁶ Ibid., October 31, 1861.

³⁷ Ibid., November 1, 1861.

throughout the five acts, and the characters are both well cast and well drawn.³⁸

The following day the same newspaper made this observation:

This extraordinary drama has produced the greatest theatrical sensation of the present season. It is placed upon the stage with a perfectness of detail never before observed in this country. The acting is of equal excellence with the scenic display and together form an ensemble impossible to be exceeded in attractiveness.³⁹

If such comments concerning the staging of this and other pieces which were praised for their realism are true, then realism in production must have been discernible long before stage historians generally recognize it. This "cut away" house must have been a forerunner of some of our modern settings which attempt to show life inside a building.

Shortly before Christmas, Mrs. Drew as seen in two more new roles, Miranda in The Busy Body, and Violet in Violet, or Scenes in the Life of an Actress.⁴⁰

Mrs. Alexina Fisher Baker, Mrs. Drew's friend since childhood, joined the company a short time after Miss Thompson departed. At her first appearance, Mrs. Drew

³⁸ Ibid., November 4, 1861.

³⁹ Ibid., November 5, 1861.

⁴⁰ Ibid., December 6, 9, 12, 1861 for the first-named play, and December 13, 1861 for the second.

played Helen to her friend's Julia in The Hunchback. On this occasion the Inquirer commented:

This exquisite play will be acted to-night for the first time this season, for the purpose of introducing Mrs. Alex. Fisher Baker in the character of "Julia." We hail the re-appearance of this popular actress with real pleasure. The whole cast of the play is admirable. Who does not welcome the "Helen" of Mrs. John Drew, so full of life and spirit?⁴¹

The two actresses were also seen in Leap Year, or the Ladies' Privilege. Mrs. Baker was Mrs. Flowerdue, and Mrs. Drew played Mrs. O'Leary.⁴²

The actress-manager took a benefit, as did several other members of the company in December. In announcing her night, the Inquirer stated that undoubtedly the largest house of the season would greet the lady manager because she was "universally esteemed, on and off the stage." The day of the benefit, the same newspaper again commented upon the occasion:

Benefit of Mrs. John Drew, tonight. This enterprising and liberal lessee will take her first benefit this season at the "Arch." Her bill is an excellent one, consisting of the sterling comedy of The Love Chase, and the Comedietta of the £ 100 Note, both pieces cast to the full strength of the company. In conducting the season thus far at the "Arch," Mrs. Drew has displayed energy and liberality. Every play presented has been placed on the stage in a manner never before attempted in Philadelphia. The company is the most complete and efficient and have been

⁴¹ Ibid., December 14, 1861.

⁴² Ibid., December 16, 1861.

concentrated regardless of expense. Mrs. Drew deserves, and will undoubtedly receive, a monster ovation.⁴³

No notice was found as to the results of the benefit performance, but if the reports, which appeared from time to time about the crowded houses at this theatre, were true, she doubtless had the reception which the Inquirer predicted.

Mrs. Drew was to "top" her production efforts to date with the Christmas presentation. Shakespeare's Love's Labor's Lost was the play selected for this season, and it made its first appearance on Christmas night. Special mention was made in the advertisements of a "grand cast, gorgeous scenery, superb costumes, intricate machinery, and characteristic music." The piece was to close with the celebrated Watteau picture of shepherds and shepherdesses "with their flocks on the margin of a rivulet of real water." A note in the advertisement stated that seats could be "secured one week in advance," the word "secured" meaning "reserved."⁴⁴

An article, which appeared in the "Theatrical Amusements" column, discussed the preparation of the play:

The time of preparation of a "display" piece, of the character of those generally produced during the holidays, varies from one to three weeks. Thus, Love's Labor Lost [sic], placed upon the stage of the

⁴³ Ibid., December 17, 1861.

⁴⁴ Ibid., December 25, 1861. This production was heralded some time in advance with the notation about "secured" seats.

Arch Street Theatre this evening, was commenced in November, and has occupied the attention and required the aid of two hundred persons. The item of paint alone has cost over \$100, while the dresses and machinery have swelled the aggregate to a large amount.

The same article said that it had been necessary "to apply the literary pruning knife to many of the passages," but that the plot was not marred, nor "the finer points, which Johnson terms 'so many sparks of genius,' omitted." The original cuckoo song was retained. A model for the final scene, which must have been a tableau, was sent from England by Mrs. Drew's husband. Seemingly it was a model based on a Watteau picture.⁴⁵

The production embraced the full strength of the company, and Mrs. Drew was seen in the leading role of Rosaline.⁴⁶ A review of the play appeared in the Inquirer two days after the first production:

We think the production of this comedy reflects great credit upon the taste of the management. It is usually considered necessary at "Christmas time" to offer the public a piece full of scenic display and spectacular effects, but Mrs. Drew tenders an exquisite Shakespearean comedy, seldom acted because it requires an array of comic talent such as is rarely found. Each scene is a study for the lover of the picturesque; while the last scene--the "Watteau Picture" is a realization of beauty which beggars description. It will doubtless

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Mrs. John Drew's Arch Street Theatre Playbill, December 25, 1861, American Playbills, Vol. II, Rare Book Collection, University of Pennsylvania Library. This collection contains playbills dated from November 16, 1861- July 5, 1862. It is not complete.

be performed for weeks to come.⁴⁷

The Inquirer continued to praise the production, and as one might expect, most of the comments were about the scenery:

Love's Labor's Lost is destined to have a most successful career. It fully deserves all that can be said in its praise. The scenery is exquisitely beautiful; the last scene is indescribable--a perfect realization of the fairy-like beauty and lightness. The arrangement of the lights falling on the water is artistic and beautiful in the extreme.⁴⁸

On January 1, the same newspaper again praised the scenery, and this time made some mention of the acting:

New Year's Night--Love's Labor's Lost will usher in the New Year. It has proved most interesting in performance, as dazzling in scenic beauty, and will doubtless enjoy a profitable run. The actors increase in spirit, and nothing can add to the beauty of the last scene. Audiences are permitted a longer view of it than at first.⁴⁹

A later review again concentrated on the scenery, but also mentioned something about the play itself:

It is one of the features of Love's Labor's Lost at the Arch, that the stage adaptation retains to so great an extent the text of the original comedy. The actors "speak the speech" with due propriety, and the scene painters and costumers have added their quota. The last picture is as near perfection as possible, and is alone worth more than the price of admission to see the great Shaksperian [sic] revival of the day.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ The Inquirer, December 27, 1861.

⁴⁸ Ibid., December 28, 1861.

⁴⁹ Ibid., January 1, 1862.

⁵⁰ Ibid., January 2, 1862.

As late as January 6, Love's Labor's Lost was said to be attracting good audiences, and seemingly they were still coming to see the scenic effects. It would appear that Shakespeare's original intent was lost, or at least obscured by the scenic display. One wonders what happened to Shakespeare's burlesque of current fads and affectations. The satirical elements seemed to have been overwhelmed by a concentration on the pastoral qualities. Indeed, with the final Watteau picture, one wonders if this production was not little more than a pleasing pastoral piece. The last review of the play to appear in the Inquirer also emphasized the pictorial elements of the production:

Indeed, it richly deserves praise, not so much for its intrinsic merit--being one of the doubtful plays of Shakespeare--but for its varied characteristics, and being well rendered by an excellent company. Watteau's picture is not only artistically but naturally represented, and the whole stage arrangement most admirably calculated to produce striking effects. The scenic artist displays a much better knowledge of the portion of his science known as CHIAROSCURO⁵¹ than many who have carried their works into the Academy.⁵²

Earlier in the season, Wheatley's production of The Tempest also emphasized the pictorial elements of the play. Wheatley even used a ballet corps, and the scenic effects were emphasized in advertisements and discussed in reviews.

⁵¹ Chiaroscuro has to do with the distribution of lights and shades in a picture.

⁵² The Inquirer, January 6, 1862.

A few seasons earlier, Wheatley and Drew had sought to make their preparations of Shakespearean plays more authentic. Now the interest in staging became so great that the chief concern was with the mounting rather than the interpretation of the play itself. Doubtless this interest was part of the general trend to emphasize scenic art and novel effects. Little significant drama was written during this period and spectacular effects frequently drew attention away from the inherent weakness of the play. Then, too, because of the lack of good new plays, managers revived older plays with spectacular productions to arouse interest in them. The audiences seemed to respond to their efforts and in turn demanded more elaborate and spectacular effects. It is therefore not surprising to find one of Shakespeare's weakest plays achieving success primarily because of the mounting given it. Even though the company was a capable one, and the acting doubtless acceptable, perhaps even commendable, the audience apparently went to see the rivulet of real water and the Watteau picture ending.

Mrs. Drew added a war play to the bill before the close of the run of Love's Labor's Lost. It was called Scotto, or the Scout and the Spy. Mrs. Drew's son, John, many years later wrote that it was the first play that he remembered in his mother's theatre:

My mother took over the lease of the Arch Street Theatre in 1861, and the first play that I remember anything at

all about is one called Scotto, the Scout, an ephemeral thing that was a concession to the great interest in the war. I do not know whether or not this was the first play that I saw nor do I know who wrote it. I imagine that it was hastily fashioned from stock material with a little added war interest. So far as I know it was never done in any other theatre. To the usual stock characters of the day was added the then prominent General MacDowell and a number of negroes.⁵³

On the first day of Scotto, the Inquirer gave this information about the piece:

In addition to Love's Labor's Lost, Mrs. John Drew produces, this evening, a new National Drama, written expressly for her theatre, by R. Jones, Esq. The subject upon which he predicates his play is the recent Trent affair, in which MASON and SLIDELL appear. Patriotic dramas, if presented in truthful colors on the stage, are calculated to excite the amor patriæ of a people; but if falsified tend only to frustrate the object and purpose of the stage "to hold the mirror up to nature."⁵⁴

The writer thought that Scotto accomplished its purpose:

The new national drama made a great hit last night. The scenery by Mr. Hayes is very fine, and the characters are all admirably performed by the excellent company attached to this theatre. The concluding tableau, the burning of Charleston, created great enthusiasm.

It is, indeed, small wonder that Drew remembered this piece for some years.

John Drew, Sr., doubtless saw the play for which he

⁵³ Drew, My Life on the Stage, p. 19.

⁵⁴ The Inquirer, January 6, 1862. This piece remained on the boards through January 11.

supplied the models and the war play, for his return to this country was announced in the Inquirer for January 10.

On January 13, Drew made his first appearance in an engagement that lasted one hundred consecutive nights.⁵⁵ He was something of a sensation, and throughout his engagement, the newspapers made frequent mention of the crowded houses and of the delight with which his audiences received him. After his first appearance, the Inquirer reported:

Never did a theatre present a picture more pleasing to the eye than it did last night, on the occasion of John Drew's debut after three years from us. His reception was such a one as a Philadelphia audience alone can give, and was received by him with a modest grace that enhanced the delight of the persons present.⁵⁶

Mrs. Drew appeared in her husband's support in several instances, although Mrs. Charles Henri played with him as a general thing. On several occasions, also, Mrs. Baker played leading roles opposite him. Mrs. Drew was seen in her old roles in The Irish Ambassador, Delicate Ground, The Knight of Arva, John Bull, Aline, Married Life, The Serious Family, and The Comedy of Errors. The last-named play gave the Drew brothers another chance to appear as the two Dromios. Seemingly Philadelphia did not become tired of them in these roles. Frank Drew also appeared with his

⁵⁵ Ibid., January 13-May 9, 1862.

⁵⁶ Ibid., January 14, 1862.

brother in A Day Well Spent, The Irish Dragoon, Rory O'More, and Black Eyed Susan.⁵⁷

On Drew's fiftieth night, the event was celebrated by the illumination of the outside of the theatre, which was called "a very pretty and well-deserved compliment to the successful star." This was an exciting event in itself, the significance of which we, who are accustomed to "names in lights," neon signs, and the like, find it hard to appreciate.

At the end of March, Crohoore-na-Bilhoge, or the Foster Brothers based on Tales of the O'Hara Family, was presented after "months of preparation." The piece was said to have been dramatized expressly for John Drew, who was seen in the role of Andy Hoolahan, the foster brother. Frank Drew was Cornelius Field, alias Crohoore-na-Bilhoge, and Mrs. Drew played Ally Deeling.⁵⁸

After the first presentation of the play, the Inquirer reported:

John Drew and Crohoore-na-Bilhoge, the new Irish Drama, so long in preparation, was played for the first time, last night to a full and fashionable house, notwithstanding the threatening weather. It was most admirably acted throughout. John Drew made his sixty-seventh appearance as Andy Hoolahan, and fairly convulsed the

⁵⁷ Ibid., January 13-May 9, 1862.

⁵⁸ Ibid., March 31, 1862.

audience throughout the evening. Frank Drew, Mrs. Mortimer, Mrs. John Drew, and Mrs. C. Henry, all appeared to great advantage. The scenery of the piece is beautiful beyond description, especially the cataract scene, the machinery is intricate and startling; in fact *Groheore-na-Bilhoge*, is a great dramatic hit, and will have a long run.⁵⁹

This play stayed on the boards through April 10. A further description of the scenic effects was given on April 4:

This piece has completely taken the public by storm. Anything comparable to the scenery has never been seen in this city. The interior of an Irish farm house--the exterior of an Irish cabin on the borders of an apparently endless bog--the Cave of Ballyfoil, with the stupendous cataract below it--these scenes cannot be surpassed for truthfulness and beauty.⁶⁰

If the Philadelphians demanded realism in representation, it appears that the lady manager of the Arch Street Theatre and Hayes, her scene painter, bent every effort to furnish it to them.

Several times during Drew's engagement, praise was given to the company and to the quality of the productions in general. On February 5, it was said that "all pieces acted during Mrs. Drew's engagement have been produced with the same care which has distinguished the management throughout the present season."⁶¹ And on April 15, this comment was made:

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, April 1, 1862.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, April 4, 1862.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, February 5, 1862.

Besides the attractions of the piece Crahoore-na-Bilhoge⁷, and the name of the favorite Irish comedian of Philadelphia, we can candidly pay a high tribute to the excellence of the entire company at the Arch. There is not a single member who does not contribute genuine and large aid to the entertainment. This is no new quality, as the theatre has long had a special reputation in this respect.⁶²

Apparently, then, Mrs. Drew's company continued to live up to the name of the "Star Company," which the group at the theatre had been called for some years.

Both Ma and Mrs. Drew participated in a testimonial benefit performance tendered to E. A. Marshall, veteran Philadelphia theatre manager. In fact, Mrs. Drew closed her theatre for the evening and moved her orchestra and many members of the company over to the Academy of Music for the occasion.⁶³

After her husband finished his engagement, Mrs. Drew was seen in several plays. She was Julian in another production of The Honeymoon, Angela in The Castle Spectre, Iquisitelittlepet in The Invisible Prince, Elinor Mowbray in Second Love, Emilie in Nationalities, or John, Jean, and

⁶² Ibid., April 15, 1862.

⁶³ Ibid., February 12, 1862. Mrs. Drew may have felt particularly grateful to Mr. Marshall, for she and other members of her family played at the Walnut under his management. Mrs. Kinlock was probably associated with him the longest. On the other hand, Mrs. Drew was very generous about giving her time to benefit performances.

Jonathan, and Zuleika in The Bride of Abydos.⁶⁴

Miss Jane Coombs, a young starring actress came to the Arch for an engagement in May. She first appeared as Julia in The Hunchback, and Mrs. Drew acted Helen. In The Wife's Secret, the visitor was seen in the role of Lady Emeline Amyott, and Mrs. Drew was Maud. The program scheduled for May 21 was The Stranger with Miss Coombs as Mrs. Haller, and The Hensymoon with the young actress in the leading role and the actress-manager in the supporting role of Volante.⁶⁵ This program was not given, for John Drew died suddenly on that day, and the theatre was closed for the remainder of the month.

Drew, who was but thirty-five years of age, complained of feeling unwell only a few days before he lapsed into unconsciousness, and died of what was called "congestion of the brain." In the autumn, he had been reported dangerously ill while on his tour of the British Isles.⁶⁶ It is not known whether the two illnesses were related. Drew was apparently in good health during his engagement at the Arch, and he was preparing to return to Ireland to fulfill another engagement. In fact, a farewell testimonial benefit

⁶⁴ Ibid., May 10-16, 1862.

⁶⁵ Ibid., May 19-21, 1862.

⁶⁶ Ibid., October 16, 1861.

had been planned for him and three hundred tickets had been sold.⁶⁷ A historian has reported that Drew was nearly blind at the time of his death.⁶⁸ This report, if true, makes his long engagement at the Arch even more remarkable. Drew's funeral was held at the family home and he was interred at Glenwood Cemetery in Philadelphia.⁶⁹ Later his remains were removed to Mount Vernon Cemetery in the same city.⁷⁰

Young John Drew reported later that he had seen only a few of his father's performances during this season. He wrote later that his father had been very popular in his native country:

The Freeman's Journal, of Dublin, printed the fact of his death with black rules or borders around the column. He was very popular there and highly regarded as an exponent of Irish drama, which in those days was romantic comedy and nothing like the Harrigan and Hart Irish plays done in New York at a later period; nor were they at all similar to the Irish Theatre of Lady Gregory and Synge.⁷¹

Drew's death was undoubtedly a loss to the theatrical profession. He seems to have been one of the

⁶⁷ Ibid., May 22, 1862.

⁶⁸ Phelps, p. 258.

⁶⁹ The Inquirer, May 26, 1862.

⁷⁰ According to the Mount Vernon Cemetery Records, he was moved in 1913.

⁷¹ Drew, My Years on the Stage, p. 23.

best of the Irish comedians, and was praised, particularly during his last engagement, for his skill in delineating different types of Irishmen. Seemingly he knew how to make his audience both laugh and cry. In addition to his line of Irish characters, Drew was a good comedian in other kinds of comedy. He also seems to have had an aptitude for bringing some of the comedy roles in Shakespearean plays to life. For years after his death, Philadelphia writers spoke of his genius. His wife many years later wrote this estimate of her husband:

And now let me devote a few lines to the late John Drew, now deceased thirty-four years. I don't think there are many persons surviving him now who remember him well, and he was worth remembering; one of the best actors I ever saw, in a long list of the most varied description. Had he lived to be forty-five, he would have been a great actor. But too early success was his ruin; it left him nothing to do. Why should he study when he was assured on all sides (except my own) that he was as near perfection as was possible for a man to be? So he finished his brief and brilliant career at thirty-four years of age, about the age when men generally study most steadily and aspire most ambitiously.⁷²

The committee in charge of the benefit planned for John Drew decided to give it to his wife instead, and it was tendered on May 30. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis (Alexina Fisher) Baker, C. R. Dodworth, Frank Drew, and Mrs. Stephens, the former Georgiana Kinlock,⁷³ appeared.

⁷² Autobiographical Sketch, pp. 141, 142.

⁷³ According to Brown, "History of the American Stage," p. 105, Georgiana married Robert L. Stephens in Australia during her tour with Drew. They had one daughter, Adine, born in 1860, who later made her home with Mrs. Drew and went on the stage.

Several days later it was announced that the receipts of the benefit amounted to almost \$1,000,⁷⁴ a sum which was doubtless most welcome to the actress-manager.

F. S. Chanfrau began an engagement on June 2, in a new national drama by Charles Gaylor called Bull Run, or, the Sacking of Fairfax Court House. This play and a variety of afterpieces held the boards until the end of the regular season.⁷⁵ Then Chanfrau and other members of the company stayed on until July 5 in a so-called "commonwealth" arrangement. Mrs. Drew's association with the theatre doubtless ended on the first date. She did not appear again after her husband's death.

During the season, programs at the Arch were usually made up of two plays, the feature performance and the afterpiece, although occasionally during the early part of the season and during John Drew's engagement, the programs were made up of three shorter pieces. Sometimes afterpieces were omitted, either if the main attraction were especially long, as it was in the case of Jeannette, or at the beginning of a long run when it was thought that the main play of the evening was of sufficient interest by

⁷⁴ The Inquirer, June 2, 1862.

⁷⁵ Ibid., June 2-July 5, 1862.

itself. Afterpieces were sometimes added near the end of the run.

Probably the most interesting of the afterpieces this season were the burlesques which featured Frank Drew. Although Frank Drew did not achieve the reputation of his brother, he nevertheless enjoyed some success as an actor, both in this country and abroad. His talent seems to have been more limited than John Drew's, and he seems to have had his greatest success in low comedy roles. The most popular of these burlesques was Mazeppa, or the Untamed Rocking Horse, a travesty upon the sensational equestrian piece, which had held the attention of the theatregoers during much of the century. It was called the "best burlesque which has been produced in this city since 1857."⁷⁶ In a review of a program which consisted of the comedy, The Way to Keep Him and Mazeppa, the Inquirer stated:

The theatre on Saturday night was crowded with an intelligent audience, who responded by applause and laughter to every fine point made in the comedy, and every atrocious pun "let off" in the burlesque.⁷⁷

On October 19, the day of the seventh performance, the same newspaper reported:

⁷⁶ Ibid., October 14, 1861.

⁷⁷ Ibid., October 16, 1861.

The popularity which the great burlesque of Mazeppa has attained, would seem sufficient to fill this theatre nightly without any other attraction--but the indefatigable management announce fresh novelty each night.⁷⁸

Mazeppa shared a program October 26 with Romeo and Juliet, which featured Miss Thompson. At that time Mazeppa was called "the great comic dramatic feature of the present season." "Many new additions of the richest order" were also promised on this night, and the commentator said that the piece would have to be seen to be appreciated.⁷⁹ It was given more than twenty performances during the regular season, so it must indeed have found favor.

The second burlesque to hold attention was Shylock, or, the Merchant of Venice Preserved, which also seems to have had some popularity. Drew was also seen in his version of Camille "with song and German Moral," and in a burlesque version of Hamlet. In these pieces Drew was usually supported by Mrs. Henri, who had an aptitude for this kind of acting. Mrs. Drew joined her brother-in-law in one of the burlesques, Guillaume Tell, or the Hero of Switzer Case. She played Freedom, Drew, Tell and Mrs. Henri, Albert.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Ibid., October 19, 1861.

⁷⁹ Ibid., October 26, 1861.

⁸⁰ Ibid., August 31, 1861-June 14, 1862.

In some instances, a pantomime was an added feature to the regular program. Charles Henri seems to have been responsible for staging them. Two that were performed several times during the season were Mad as a March Hare and Don Juan.⁸¹

Despite newspaper reports of crowded houses throughout the season, Mrs. Drew had financial difficulties. We have her own word, as previously reported, that she had to borrow money to pay salaries. Further evidence of financial difficulties is evident in this item which appeared in a newspaper dated February 3:

MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS OF THE ARCH STREET THEATRE-- Yesterday afternoon, at three o'clock, the annual meeting of the Stockholders of the Arch Street Theatre was held in the hall of the Phoenix Hose Company, Filbert street, above seventh. The Treasurer's report was read and accepted. The amount received since last meeting was, up to date, \$3660.75; amount expended for the same period, \$3658.51--leaving a balance in the hands of the Treasurer of \$2.24. A motion was made to appoint a committee of three to investigate the report of the committee. Lost. Also, that the report of the Board of Agents be Approved. Agreed to and finally adopted. A committee of two was also appointed to investigate the Treasurer's report. A communication was received from MRS. JOHN DREW, asking for a reduction of rent, and showing the amount of expenditures which she has been under for scenery, etc., the reduction to be left entirely to the discretion of the stockholders. The communication was laid on the table. Mrs. Christian offered a resolution which asked the stockholders to receive \$4000 for the lease of the theatre for the present year, instead of the whole amount, \$6200. The reason stated in the resolution was the depressing influences created on all theatres from the state of the times.

⁸¹ Ibid.

An amendment was offered, binding Mrs. Drew to pay the amount--\$4000-- in two weeks from date. The motion was not carried, by a vote of 43 to 6. The original resolution was then passed. R. P. Desilver, Robert Christian, and William Millward were then elected as trustees. An amendment to the constitution was also offered, which will lay over until the next meeting. After the election of officers, the meeting adjourned. A party of the stockholders, opposed to the action of the present meeting, was called after the adjournment, to meet on Thursday evening, at eight o'clock, at Wetherill House.⁸²

According to a later report, the second meeting was adjourned without any business being done because only three stockholders made an appearance.⁸³

Mrs. Drew's financial difficulties were probably due to a combination of factors. The times were indeed troubled because of the war. However, the national emergency did not keep people away from her house if we are to believe newspaper reports. Doubtless there was an increase in the cost of materials. Then, too, she had a large company, and several of the players were well-established members of the profession and were in a position to command fair salaries. Even though the company may have been reduced in size during John Drew's hundred-nights engagement, when the full company was not needed, the salaries doubtless were an expensive item. Furthermore, the house was relatively small and admission prices

⁸² Ibid., February 3, 1862.

⁸³ Ibid., February 7, 1862.

were low; as a result only a certain amount could be realized on ticket sales even if the house were crowded. The largest item of expense quite possibly was concerned with the mounting of the productions. Mrs. Drew, in attempting to please her public, and doubtless to maintain her own ideas of artistic production, mounted her plays very carefully. She seems to have taken pride in putting them on in good order. In her first season, she acquired a reputation for liberality and attention to detail which was to characterize her long years of active management of the Arch Street Theatre, and was to make her house one of the nation's first-class theatres.

Mrs. Drew had become a member of a highly competitive profession, and other theatre managers were catering to the public demand for diversion. She had to put forth her best efforts to meet the competition. Her lavishly executed productions served a purpose, for they attracted people to the theatre who might not have come otherwise. They came to see a genuine rivulet of water, a spectacular conflagration, or a cataract and found that the theatre held other attractions besides the spectacular effects. Thus they returned to see the comedies and other plays that did not depend upon their mounting for their appeal.

In her first season of management, Mrs. Drew gave her audiences a variety of entertainment, comedies,

melodramas, tragedies, novelty entertainments, and tragedies. The emphasis, however, was on pieces that would make people laugh. Many people probably came to the theatre to divert their thoughts from the war, which was by this time of major concern. The preponderance of comedies, farces, and burlesques offered by Mrs. Drew's company helped to satisfy this need. For those who wished to have the war called to their attention, the actress-manager brought out two national dramas that dealt with the war theme.

Despite financial difficulties, Mrs. Drew, in her first season as manager of the Arch Street Theatre was able to establish herself.

CHAPTER VII

ACTRESS-MANAGER, STAR-STOCK COMPANY THEATRE (1861-1866)

The second season at Mrs. John Drew's Arch Street Theatre began on August 31, 1862, with Bulwer-Lytton's comedy, Money. Mrs. Drew acted Clara Douglas, and Barton Hill from the Winter Garden, New York, the new leading man in the company, was Alfred Vesey. Several other new people were engaged for the season, people whose names have long since been forgotten, and some of the players from the previous season returned.¹ Georgiana Kinlock Stephens' name appeared in advertisements as a stock company member, although it is possible, even probable that she joined her sister's company the first season. Fredericks, Murphy, and Dodworth were again on the staff.

The policy was different this season from that of the first, when the theatre was primarily a stock company. Either Mrs. Drew was not able to recruit a stock company strong enough to operate strictly as a stock house, or she felt that she must follow the policy of other theatre

¹ George Seilhamer, "Mrs. Drew as Manager," The Times-Philadelphia, May 8, 1892.

managers and bring in visiting stars.²

The first to appear was Miss Maggie Mitchell, a popular young comedienne. With the support of the Arch Street Company, Miss Mitchell delighted audiences for ten performances with Fanchon, or The Cricket. She was also seen in Margot, the Poultry Dealer, Katty O'Sheal, and The Four Sisters.³

Miss Jane Coombs, whose spring engagement had been interrupted by the untimely death of John Drew, returned to the Arch on September 15 for her first appearance of the second season. The actress-manager supported the young star in her first play, The Wife's Secret, which ran four nights. Miss Coombs was Lady Eveline, and Mrs. Drew was Maria, her maid. During this engagement Miss Coombs appeared in four performances of The World of Fashion, and one performance each of Fazio, The Love Chase, Love's Sacrifice, The Lady of Lyons, and Ada, the Princess of Lombardy. On September 23, a benefit was given for the orphan children of soldiers, and Miss Coombs volunteered for it. The young lady returned in

² This was a common difficulty resulting from the so-called "star system." When a player achieved some small success, he frequently gave up stock company work to troup around the country as a star. It became increasingly difficult as time went on to engage competent stock players.

³ The Inquirer, 1-13, 1862.

February, and was again seen in some of the same pieces.

She also acted in The Stranger, Love, or the Countess of Surf, Evadne, and Ingomar, the Barbarian.⁴

On September 29, one Philadelphia newspaper announced an attraction at the Arch which must have aroused considerable interest:

The name of either Bateman, Wallack or Adams, would have been sufficient to have filled the Arch Street Theatre with the more intelligent class of theatre-goers. The Management, presents all three to-night, in the case of the Hunchback.⁵

Miss Kate Bateman⁶ was billed as "the Great Tragic Artist of the Age." The trio appeared through October 25, and presented a variety of offerings including Fazio, The Lady and the Devil, Romeo and Juliet, London Assurance, The Honeymoon, The School for Scandal, Rosa Gregorio, The Madonna of Art, and Black Eyed Susan.⁷ The engagement of three stars, J. W. Wallack, Jr., Edwin Adams, and Miss

⁴ The Inquirer, September 15-27, 1862, February 9-21, 1863.

⁵ Ibid., September 29, 1862.

⁶ Kate Bateman (1843-1917) and her sister Eileen were child prodigies. They caught the fancy of theatre-goers when they appeared as Richard III and Richmond at the ages of four and six in New York in 1849. Another sister, Isabelle, also went on the stage. Both Kate and Isabelle played with Sir Henry Irving. The Batemans were of a theatrical family. Their grandparents were Mr. and Mrs. Joe Cowell, their mother was Mrs. Sidney F. Bateman, a playwright, and their father was H. L. Bateman, actor and manager.

⁷ The Inquirer, September 29-October 25, 1862.

Bateman, may not have been as financially rewarding as the employment of a single star might have been because of the salaries involved, but Mrs. Drew must have considered they were worth the extra cost because of the prestige their appearances brought her theatre. In this connection, the Inquirer remarked:

The introduction of the three artists at the same time upon the boards of the Arch certainly constitutes an era in theatrical history. The manageress, who launches her boat upon the dramatic waves, in such a sea of war and political tumult, and with such a valuable cargo, is activated by the same enterprise as the advertiser who liberally heralds his goods in the dull season, knowing that the public appreciate and repay enterprise, no matter in what form it may be displayed.⁸

The next star to appear was John Sleeper Clarke, who was a favorite in Philadelphia. Since leaving the city, he had had success in New York, particularly in Babes in the Woods and The Toodles. During Clarke's engagement, which lasted sixty consecutive nights, Mrs. Drew frequently appeared with him, usually in some of the plays in which they had acted in their days together at Wheatley and Clarke's Arch Street Theatre.⁹

⁸ Ibid., September 30, 1862.

⁹ Ibid., October 27, 1862-January 3, 1863. They appeared together in The Rivals, She Stoops to Conquer, Jonathan Bradford, Married Life, The School of Reform, Gibaldi, Everybody's Friend, Our American Cousin, The Octoroon, The Maid Queen, Leap Year, All That Glitters Is Not Gold, The Poor Gentleman, The Willow Copse, The Eton Boy, Paul Pry, and The Lonely Man.

Mrs. Drew appeared in new roles during this period in Babes in the Woods, Peter Waxem, and The Midnight Watch. In these plays she acted the parts of Lady Blanche Rushton, Marian Woodville, and Pauline.¹⁰

On November 3, it was reported that Clarke's success was even greater than that of Wallack, Adams, and Bateman.¹¹ The fact that his engagement lasted so long is an indication of the delight which Philadelphians must have received from his comedy portrayals. The support given to him by Mrs. Drew must also have contributed greatly to his success.

Miss Caroline Richings followed Clarke, appearing for the most part in musical drama, although she was seen in Anna Cora Mowatt's social comedy, Fashion, and in J. A. Sperry's Extremes. Her appearances in The Daughter of the Regiment, The Enchantress, and Satanella, or the Power of Love, gave Philadelphia audiences a chance to hear the young actress in singing roles.¹² While The Enchantress was playing, the Inquirer commented:

The grand spectacular and musical drama, with the spectacular singing of Miss Caroline Richings, is proving the great attraction of this very attractive season at this theatre. The house is full to repletion every night, and seats are now taken up to Monday next. It is certainly a grand treat and a great hit and bids fair for a very long run.¹³

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., November 3, 1862.

¹² Ibid., January 5-February 7, 1863.

¹³ Ibid., January 21, 1863.

The next star probably did not excite any particular interest when he first appeared at the Arch Street Theatre, unless, of course, theatregoers were eager to see the acting of the son of a famous tragedian. However, two years later those who had seen him doubtless had much to say about it, for the star was John Wilkes Booth.¹⁴

Booth was late in arriving for his engagement and Mrs. Drew brought Edwin Adams into the theatre to fill out the week. She appeared with him in The Marble Heart, The Lady of Lyons, Wild Oats, and Dreams of Delusion. The last-named play seemed to have furnished her with a new role, that of Lady Viola Harleigh.¹⁵

On March 2, Booth appeared in a role which had been a favorite of his father, Junius Brutus Booth, and had also been successfully portrayed by his elder brother, Edwin. It was the title role of Richard III. Again Mrs. Drew acted the role of Queen Elizabeth in the support of a Booth. Her second appearance with the young actor was in The Marble Heart. Before its presentation, the Inquirer

¹⁴ John Wilkes Booth (1839-1865) is not so well known today for his acting ability as for his infamous crime, the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, April 14, 1865. Booth made his first appearance on the stage in 1856, and was at the time of his engagement at Mrs. Drew's theatre, an actor of great promise. He had some of the fire which characterized his father's great acting. It has also been suggested that he inherited his father's mental instability. Booth left the stage in 1864 after he appeared in New York as Mark Antony to the Cassius of J. B. Booth, Jr., and the Brutus of Edwin Booth.

¹⁵ The Inquirer, February 24-28, 1863.

commented:

This play /The Marble Heart/ met with the greatest success when acted last week at this theatre and great curiosity will doubtless be felt to see Mr. Booth in the character of "Raphael, the Sculptor," so antagonistic a part to that of Richard III, in which he made so great a hit last night.¹⁶

John Wilkes Booth was supported by Mrs. Drew in several other Shakespearean plays, The Merchant of Venice, Katherine and Petruchio, Hamlet, and Macbeth.¹⁷ The last-named play was selected for Booth's benefit, and while he and the actress-manager played the leading roles at the Arch Street Theatre, Edwin Forrest and Madame Ponisi played them at Wheatley's New Chestnut Street Theatre.¹⁸ Booth and Mrs. Drew also appeared together in Money and in The Apostate, and Booth was also seen in two productions of The Robbers supported by other members of the company.¹⁹

The week following Booth's appearances, Mrs. Drew

¹⁶ Ibid., March 3, 1863.

¹⁷ Ibid., March 2-14, 1863.

¹⁸ Wheatley opened the New Chestnut on January 26, 1863 and booked such stars as Forrest, Cushman, and J. H. Hackett. Despite the fact that speculators cleared over \$3000 on the first performance, and he presented great stars, the venture was not a success and he retired at the end of the year. Forrest and Cushman could by this time command such large salaries that there was not much profit in booking them. This may be one of the reasons that they never appeared at Mrs. Drew's theatre.

¹⁹ The Inquirer, March 2-14, 1863.

depended upon the resources of the stock company to provide entertainment for her patrons. Four performances were given of Madame de Marguerittes' [sic] dramatization of Braddon's novel Aurora Floyd with Mrs. Drew in the title role. Also during the week she acted in Our American Cousin and on Frank Drew's benefit night, she appeared in The Cricket on the Hearth.²⁰

The next attraction to come to the Arch was Miss Mary Provost, who was a successful starring actress of that season, but who is quite forgotten today. She appeared in a number of melodramas.²¹

Adams played another engagement in April, and was seen in five presentations of The Heretic, a play originally written for Forrest by Judge Conrad. Adams was Adrian, the Huguenot, and Mrs. Drew was Elinor. Adams' acting and the playing of the supporting company was praised in an Inquirer review dated April 14. For the last six nights of his engagement, he was Robert Landry in The Dead Heart. Mrs. Drew played Catherine Duval.²²

The last star of the season was Mrs. D. P. Bowers, who appeared in The Woman, Camille, and Fazio.²³

²⁰ Ibid., March 16-21, 1863.

²¹ Ibid., March 23-April 11, 1863. Miss Provost was Nell Gwynne, or the King's Rival, Ingomar, the Barbarian, The Countess and Grisette, Lucretia Borgia, Lucie D'Arville, or the Mesalliance, Camille, The Female Gambler, Masks and Faces, and The Duelist.

²² Ibid., April 13-25, 1863.

²³ Ibid., April 27-May 2, 1863.

The stock company took over the stage for the remainder of the season and repeated plays seen earlier. Mrs. Henri appeared in George Barnwell on her benefit night on May 8, and Mrs. Drew was seen in Grist to the Mill at hers on the last night of the season.²⁴ On May 9, this announcement appeared in the Inquirer:

This is the last night in which performances will be given at the Arch Street Theatre in its present form. For two seasons Mrs. John Drew has managed this establishment with tact, enterprise and pecuniary success. The changes which will be made during the vacation will not only render the exterior more beautiful, but it will increase the capacity of the house to the extent of \$1,000, while scenery and additional accommodations will characterize every part of the structure which will be opened on September 1.

Mrs. Drew's second season as a manager was apparently successful or the stockholders would not have decided to renovate the house for her. Her company reportedly was very capable and was able to furnish good support for the visiting stars who provided a variety of entertainment. There were reports of crowded houses during the season, which seems to have been a good one generally in Philadelphia despite the war situation. The plans for the remodeling project were announced well in advance of the close of the season:

²⁴ Ibid., May 4-9. The plays in which Mrs. Drew appeared were repeat performances of The Honeymoon, The Willow Copse, Our American Cousin, Up in the Hills, Aurora Floyd, and Grist to the Mill.

At the close of the present season, the front of the theatre which in the present building stands back from the sidewalk is to be extended as far as the line of the street. The first story will be the same in the new Theatre as it is at present. The upper stories will be of brick, rough-cast and ornamented with pilasters. A large hall will be left for the vestibule with two ticket offices and a stairway leading to the family circle. From the vestibule is the entrance into the lobby with a flight of stairs on each side. The lobby will be circular, the same circle as the auditory walls. From the lobby doors will lead into the auditory, which is divided into the orchestra walls and parquette. The parquette circle on one floor, and dress circle and family circle above [sic]. The stage will be the only portion of the present theatre which will not be rebuilt. There will be two proscenium boxes on each side, the upper being the largest and most attractive. The circle rails will be of open or perforated iron work, kept in white with gilding. The lighting of the theatre is to be done entirely by these railings, there being no chandeliers. The dome will be ornamented by a semi-circular ventilator, and with the walls, will be frescoed with original designs by the scenic artist of the Theatre. The stage will be furnished with new flies and scenery. The curtains will all be repainted. The different circles will be supported by eleven ornamental columns. The seats in the parquette and orchestra will be made of cast iron, with movable backs and seats covered with red plush.²⁵

The season closed early so that the renovation could be done during the summer, and Mrs. John Drew could begin her third season in spacious quarters.

The 1863-64 season at Mrs. John Drew's New Arch Street Theatre, as it was to be called for several years, did not get under way until September 12, presumably

²⁵ Ibid., March 31, 1863.

because alterations were not completed and the house was not ready at the customary time of opening, around the last of August. Mrs. Drew must have been busy recruiting players during the summer, for several new people joined the ranks of the company. Most notable of these were Stuart Robson and Owen Marlowe from Laura Keane's Theatre, New York. Another new member was G. H. Griffiths from New Orleans, who remained with Mrs. Drew many seasons. Miss Josephine Henry, from Niblo's Garden, New York, later married Craig, one of the members of the company. Also noted in the group of players retained were Miss Price, Mrs. Stephens, Mrs. Stoneall, Barton Hill, and Wallis.

The new seating arrangement gave an excuse for a change in prices, and seats in the parquet and dress circle now cost fifty cents, the family circle twenty-five cents, secured seats seventy-five cents, orchestra stalls, one dollar and the boxes six and eight dollars.²⁶

On the opening night The Rivals and Betsy Baker were presented. Miss Carr, a new member of the company, formerly of the Winter Garden, New York, was Mrs. Malaprop. Mrs. Drew did not appear, but a playbill for the night announced: "After the comedy Mrs. Jno. Drew will have the honor of addressing the audience."²⁷ A similar

²⁶ Ibid., September 12, 1863.

²⁷ Mrs. John Drew's New Arch Street Theatre Playbill, September 12, 1863, Vol. III, Collection of Playbills, Ridge-way Branch Library, Philadelphia. This volume contains scattered playbills dated May 25, 1857-September 7, 1864.

notation appeared in a one-fourth column advertisement in the Inquirer on the opening day, September 12. It is assumed that Mrs. Drew made the speech that was scheduled.

On September 28, 1863, Sidney Drew, or Sidney White, was born, as near as this writer has been able to determine.²⁸ Mrs. Drew, in her Autobiographical Sketch, referred to him as "my adopted son, Sidney White, for many years known as Sidney Drew. . . ."²⁹ No where in the work cited does she refer to him in any way that would lead one to believe that he might be a natural son rather than an adopted child. At least two writers of a later date have indicated that they believe Sidney Drew was a

²⁸ According to the Catalogue of Matriculates of the College, University of Pennsylvania, 1749-1893, p. 384, Sydney Drew White, son of John White and Maria Drew, was born at sea, September 28, 1863. [This is the person under consideration, for his profession and address were given in the index.]

²⁹ See pp. 129-130 for the quotation cited. On p. 106, after mentioning her tour of 1857, Mrs. Drew said parenthetically "(It is proper to say that I had three children in these five years--Louisa, John and Georgie.)" and no where else does she mention having any more children. On p. 129, she talked about her retirement [1892] and said that she still had the love of her two remaining children. Apparently she referred to John and Georgie, for immediately afterward she mentioned Sidney as her adopted son. On pp. 138 and 141, she told of the death of her two daughters and spoke of her son, John.

natural son. The first is Fowler,³⁰ the second, Barrymore.³¹ Although he spoke of his sisters, John Drew made no mention of a brother, or for that matter, of a foster brother in his biography.³² To further obscure the facts of Sidney Drew's life, newspapers published different statements as to his vital statistics.³³ There is no evidence that Sidney Drew was baptized at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church as were the other Drew children and Adine Stephens (Drew), Mrs. Drew's niece and other foster child. From the evidence at hand, one would think that Mrs. Drew's statement as to identity was the true one.

³⁰ Fowler, p. 10, said: "Louisa met John Drew, a native of County Clare, Ireland. They were married in 1850, and had four children in the following five years: Louisa, John, Georgianna [sic], and Sidney." The statement is not possible when one considers that Louisa was born in 1851 and Georgiana in 1855. On p. 12, he stated: "Sidney Drew, her favorite son, was a young man of extraordinary skill at games of billiards or pool."

³¹ Barrymore, We Barrymores, p. 35 commented: "Uncle Googan was Sidney Drew. I am proud to claim kin to him although in her autobiography, published in 1899, Louisa Lane Drew states that she had adopted Sidney. Mrs. Drew, of course, may say what she wishes in the matter, but Uncle Googan certainly looked like her."

³² Drew, My Years on the Stage.

³³ The New York Times, April 10, 1919, and the Philadelphia Inquirer of the same date, both stated that he was fifty-four years old when he died. That would have made his birthdate 1865. An examination of that season would show that it would have been impossible for him to have been born to Mrs. Drew in that year. The New York newspaper said that he was a brother of John Drew and that he was born in Philadelphia. The Philadelphia newspaper, however, called him an adopted brother of John Drew.

Again this season Mrs. Drew operated her theatre as a star theatre, although the company did on some occasions supply the main feature of the evening. Frequently they alone were seen in the shorter pieces.

Miss Richings was the first star to appear, and this season she was accompanied by "The Richings Opera Troupe," which specialized in English opera. In two different engagements, the New Arch patrons were treated to ten different operas.³⁴

Apparently Mrs. Drew had found the combination of stars so successful the previous season that she decided to book another trio this season. James W. Wallack, Jr. was again a member of the group, the other players being E. L. Davenport and Mrs. Farren. They were at the New Arch three weeks, and at the beginning of the second week, it was reported that immense houses had attended all the previous week. They played a second engagement of two weeks a short time later. All three members of the combination appeared every evening, but they did not

³⁴ The Inquirer, September 14-October 17, 1863, and February 15-27, 1864, notes the company's appearances in The Daughter of the Regiment, The Rose of Tyrol, The Doctor of Alcantara, The Postillion of Lonjumeau, The Bohemian Girl, The Enchantress, The Tableau of Washington, Diadeste, or the Velled Lady, and Linda di Chamounix.

always appear in the same play.³⁵

Mrs. D. P. Bowers also returned this season, appearing on the stage of Mrs. Drew's theatre for a month. New plays in her repertoire this season were The Mystery of Audley Court, or Lady Audley's Secret, and Miriam, or the Puritan's Wife.³⁶

The next star to appear was none other than Mrs. Drew's brother-in-law, who was not a member of her stock company this season. He appeared in a round of Irish plays, some of which had been in his brother John's repertoire, and in some burlesques, which had brought him acclaim in previous seasons. This comment was made on his playing:

Frank Drew has received such a welcome from his old friends since his present engagement at the Arch, the first he has performed since his return from Europe, that must fill his heart with satisfaction and pride. He has greatly improved and now ranks among the best of American comedians. His performances are nightly greeted with crowded audiences.³⁷

³⁵ Ibid., October 19-November 7, 1863, and December 7-19, 1863, notes their appearances in Macbeth, Hamlet, Richard III, Julius Caesar, The King of the Commons, Damon and Pythias, The Bridal, Still Waters Run Deep, The Iron Mask, Werner, St. Mark, or the Soldier of Fortune, Money, The Merchant of Venice, Jane Shore, London Assurance, Therese, and A Wife for a Year.

³⁶ Ibid., November 9-December 5, 1863.

³⁷ Ibid., December 26, 1863.

Drew's most successful role during this engagement seems to have been that of Hawkshaw, the detective, in Taylor's The Ticket of Leave Man. When he returned for a second engagement in May, he had three new pieces in his repertoire, MacCarthy More, A Bull in a China Shop, and I'll Treated Il Trovatore. Also during this engagement, Drew and Robson, who had taken his place as low comedian with the company, brought the two Dromios on the stage again. Evidently this combination was successful, for Shakespeare's comedy was repeated five nights in succession. Of this play, the Inquirer said:

Shakespeare's glorious Comedy of Errors has been revived with great success. At the Arch Street Theatre, Mr. Frank Drew and Stuart Robson as the "Dromios" keep the house in a continual roar, and so alike are they in dress, form, feature, movement, that to distinguish them as the play goes on requires more than ordinary attention.³⁸

Even though Drew was not a member of the company, he was seen on the stage of the New Arch for twelve weeks during the season.³⁹

Mrs. Drew did not make an appearance in an acting role upon the stage of her newly rebuilt theatre until January 18. Then her appearance was heralded by the writer for the Inquirer:

³⁸ Ibid., May 31, 1864.

³⁹ Ibid., December 21, 1863-January 17, 1864, and May 9-June 25, 1864.

The public will be treated tonight at the Arch with the first appearance this season of Mrs. John Drew, who will appear as Lady Teazle in the fine old comedy of The School for Scandal. This popular actress will be supported by the excellent company at the Arch, and the characters will be well sustained. Mrs. Drew appears during the week in a round of her best and most popular characters. Her numerous friends will fill the theatre this evening.⁴⁰

On the next few evenings, Mrs. Drew appeared in two plays each night. She Stoops to Conquer and Grist to the Mill shared a bill. Wives as They Were and Maids as They Are and Follies of a Night were seen together, and The Loan of a Lover and The Belle's Stratagem were played the same night. Barton Hill and Stuart Robson played the chief male roles in these plays.⁴¹ On January 22, it was reported that crowded houses were seen nightly at "this popular place of amusement." The program for that evening, a benefit, which Mrs. Drew took, was The Jealous Wife and Somebody Else.⁴²

The bill scheduled for January 23, A Bold Stroke for a Husband, and The Willow Copse, in which Mrs. Drew was to appear, was canceled and the theatre closed because of the sudden death at the age of thirty-five of Georgiana Kinlock Stephens who had been ill only a week.⁴³ Mrs.

⁴⁰ Ibid., January 18, 1864.

⁴¹ Ibid., January 19-21, 1864.

⁴² Ibid., January 22, 1864.

⁴³ Ibid., January 25, 1864.

Stephens was survived by a daughter, Adine, who made her home with Mrs. Drew and was known later on the stage both as Adine Stephens and Adine Drew.

The theatre was opened again January 26, but Mrs. Drew did not resume her interrupted round of old comedies. Instead, the members of the company took benefits.⁴⁴

Miss Charlotte Thompson, who had been a member of Mrs. Drew's first stock company, returned to the theatre as a star and was seen in The Lady of Lyons, Little Barefoot, Little Padette, the Cricket, The Hunchback, and Victorine.⁴⁵

Mrs. Drew resumed her round of comedies the last of February and appeared for twelve nights in many of her old and favorite roles. The Inquirer on several occasions praised the comedienne's ability. On the first day it commented: "It is rarely that Mrs. Drew appears on the stage and the present opportunity should not be lost to see her."⁴⁶ A similar statement appeared in the same newspaper the next day. At the beginning of the second week, this comment appeared:

Mrs. John Drew will only continue her engagement at this popular place of amusement during the present week. The houses are nightly crowded to

⁴⁴ Ibid., January 26-30, 1864.

⁴⁵ Ibid., February 1-13, 1864.

⁴⁶ Ibid., February 29, March 1, 1864.

witness the magnificent delineations of characters of this actress.⁴⁷

And a few days later, her appearance as Lady Teazle was noted:

The School for Scandal will be performed at this theatre this evening. Mrs. John Drew, who will appear as "Lady Teazle," is so well known as an excellent actress, that to praise her would be superfluous. All who have witnessed her performances have pronounced them most excellent. The evening's entertainment will conclude with the piece entitled The Loan of a Lover.⁴⁸

Strangely enough an article that appeared on the day of Mrs. Drew's benefit contradicted the reports of crowded audiences mentioned in earlier newspaper items:

To-night Mrs. Drew takes a benefit presenting Leap Year and Sketches in India. The audiences at the Arch have been very slim during the last two weeks, owing to the fact that the public well knew that the company did not possess the talent requisite to a first-class representation of the plays announced. As the artists of the Arch were selected solely with reference to the "star" system it will be better for the management to adhere to it, and not further expose the weakness of the company. . . . Mrs. Drew, for her sake alone, deserves a worthy benefit this evening as upon her has solely rested, during the past fortnight, the burden of the audience's enjoyment.⁴⁹

The company this season had many new members who had not had a chance to establish a "following" in

⁴⁷ Ibid., March 7, 1864.

⁴⁸ Ibid., March 9, 1864.

⁴⁹ Ibid., March 11, 1864.

Philadelphia. Doubtless the playgoers missed some of their old favorites like the Gilberts, Shewell, Miss Taylor, and Mrs. Henri. Perhaps, too, the new players had not played together long enough to achieve any kind of acting ensemble. It could also be true that many of these players, who were young, were not familiar with the roles to which they were assigned in Mrs. Drew's favorite plays, and they might have found it a hardship to "get up" in so many different roles at short notice. It seems that the reviewer was rather unjust in his statement that the company lacked talent, for several players later became stars, while others remained with the company and became favorite players. Stuart Robson became very well known for his comedy efforts, as did Craig. Hill proved to be a capable actor, a writer, and a good stage manager. Mrs. Stoneall and Miss Price had received praise other seasons for their acting, and Marlowe and Griffiths were to become valued members of Mrs. Drew's organization. If the revival performances of the old comedies this season were not a complete success, as suggested by the last-mentioned Inquirer commentary, it is likely that a combination of factors was responsible.

The next stars to appear were Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams, popular players of Irish boy and Yankee girl roles. They played their specialty pieces and again there

were reports of the theatre being crowded.⁵⁰

After the Williams' engagement, the actress manager presented the most spectacular production of the season, Rosedale, or the Rifle Ball. It proved to be a great "hit" at Mrs. Drew's theatre. A preliminary announcement stated:

To-night Mrs. John Drew will be welcomed back to the stage by hosts of friends and admirers, in /Lester/ Wallack's fine drama Rosedale, or the Rifle Ball. In the character of Rosa Leigh we may expect to see all the splendid action and elegant points which mark the acting of this accomplished lady. The play is full of interest, and one that will have a great run at the ever-popular Arch. Extraordinary efforts have been made to put it upon the stage in the most superb style. The scenery is all new and choice. Mrs. Drew is supported by a strong cast of characters.⁵¹

The advertisements described eight different scenes. Apparently the most striking was the last one, which was laid in the conservatory of Rosedale Manor House, and was illuminated for the ball. The original waltz gallop entitled "The Rifles" was danced by thirty-two ladies and gentlemen.⁵²

The production was favorably received, and the management was praised for producing the piece:

The management have displayed their usual enterprise and liberality in the production of the piece. Mrs. Drew, a host in herself appears to great advantage, and the remaining cast of characters is excellent, comprising the full strength of the company.⁵³

⁵⁰ Ibid., March 14-April 2, 1864.

⁵¹ Ibid., April 4, 1864.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., April 9, 1864.

And later the following item appeared:

One of the greatest dramatic hits of the day has been the production of Lester Wallack's great play of Rosedale at the Arch Street Theatre. No piece has ever been put more completely on the stage of this city. In point of scenic effect, it is superb. No expense has been spared in the production, and the cast of characters is excellent. The principal character, "Rosa Leigh," is sustained admirably by Mrs. John Drew.⁵⁴

Stuart Robson was praised for his work in the play late in the run. He was called "inimitable" in his role of the squire. He introduced a song in the last act which never failed to receive an enthusiastic encore. The Inquirer, which reported the foregoing, also stated that although he was a stock actor he had already made himself a star.⁵⁵ Apparently this newspaper found some talent did exist in the company after all. Rosedale was on the boards a month.⁵⁶

This was only one of a number of plays that Mrs. Drew produced that had first been seen at Wallack's. Her son reported later on her arrangement with the New York manager:

. . . My mother had an arrangement with Lester Wallack, by which she had the first choice of all the plays that he bought from English authors. When she considered doing one of these, she would go to New York to see the Wallack production and judge it not only for Philadelphia audiences but with an idea of its suitability for the Arch Street

⁵⁴ Ibid., April 11, 1864.

⁵⁵ Ibid., April 26, 1864.

⁵⁶ Ibid., April 4-May 6, 1864.

Theatre company.⁵⁷

The last week of the season featured a double attraction, Cecile Rush and Miss Lotta.⁵⁸ Mrs. Rush seemed to favor serious roles, but Miss Lotta Crabtree⁵⁹ appeared in a "Grand Musical Terpsichorean Interlude." She danced, sang, and played her banjo. There were no advance notices of her appearance, possibly because she was not yet well known in the East. This was her first appearance in Philadelphia. The Inquirer found both actresses pleasing:

The new play *Ida Lee*, was favorably received last evening. It is finely written and reflects credit upon the dramatist. Mrs. Rush, who sustained the role of the heroine, acquitted herself very well, and was honored with a call before the curtain. She is an excellent elocutionist, and possesses many merits as an actress. Miss Lotta, a favorite California comedienne, made a very successful debut last evening. Her banjo solo was rapturously applauded, as also "Mrs. MacGowan's Reel," which was irresistibly comic. She is a youthful artist, of more than ordinary talent, and acts, sings, dances and "picks the banjo" like a veteran.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Drew, My Life on the Stage, p. 28.

⁵⁸ The Inquirer, June 27-July 4, 1864.

⁵⁹ Lotta Crabtree (1847-1924) was said to have been taught to dance by Lola Montez, while both were in western mining camps. Miss Montez wished to take her on a tour of Australia, but her mother refused to let her go and took over her daughter's career. Lotta was a popular child actress in the mining camps, and later made a hit in San Francisco. She scored her biggest success in New York as Little Nell in 1867.

⁶⁰ The Inquirer, June 28, 1864.

Lotta, who was at this time only seventeen years old, became a favorite in Philadelphia, and Mrs. Drew booked her at the Arch for many seasons.

Thus ended Mrs. Drew's third season at the Arch Street Theatre, one which also seems to have been successful. As manager, she succeeded in booking actors of ability into her theatre and was able to give her patrons a wide variety of entertainment. They had opportunities to see capable players perform some of the great tragedies. They saw, also, some of the popular melodramas of the day and some of the old comedies. The patrons who enjoyed English opera had several opportunities to attend that type of entertainment, and those who favored Irish comedy had a chance to laugh at Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams and Frank Drew. Several years later some of the playgoers could brag that they saw Lotta "the darling of the Gold Coast" in her first Philadelphia season. The stock company may not have been as strong as the companies of the two previous seasons, but it was nevertheless adequate, and many of the members formed the nucleus for the strong company of later seasons. Doubtless many of the new and less expert performers received good training under the direction of Mrs. Drew and her capable stage manager, Fredericks, which enabled them to do better work in subsequent seasons.

September 3, the opening date of the 1864-65 season, brought many new stock players to Mrs. John Drew's New Arch Street Theatre. Among them were James Garden from the London and Dublin theatres, Walter Donaldson from Niblo's Garden, Frank Finn from Boston, Cornelia Jefferson of the famous Jefferson family of actors, Mrs. E. N. Thayer, the delightful delineator of comic old women, who was making her first appearance in five years, Ed Marble, and Frank Stull.⁶¹ The last-named joined the company during the previous season. Players from the previous season included Miss Price, Robson, Marlowe, Griffiths, and Wallace. Later in the season Miss Annie Graham joined the company to play leading roles. Dodworth, Murphy and Fredericks were still in their positions on the staff.⁶²

⁶¹ A. Frank Stull, "Where Actors Learned Their Art," Lippincott's Monthly Magazine, LXXV (March, 1905), p. 372, wrote: "It was while the Arch-Street playhouse in Philadelphia was the most brilliant light in the theatrical firmament that I became connected with the organization. The stage manager was William S. Fredericks, who had a reputation for crabbedness that struck terror to the hearts of the entire profession. . . . I was twenty-four, and I was leading man at the Race-Street theatre, as good a house as any in the country; but it was not the Arch--not the theatre of Mrs. John Drew." Stull's name appears in a playbill dated June 25, 1864, Drew, My Life on the Stage, pp. 30, 31.

⁶² The Inquirer, September 3, 1864. The same newspaper, January 23, 1865, gave Miss Graham's name in a cast list in support of Lawrence Barrett.

The actress-manager evidently felt that she had a strong enough company to start the season with a series of old comedies. The first play was The School for Scandal, and, as might be expected, Mrs. Drew was Lady Teazle. Stull, one of the actors said later that she liked to choose this play to open the season because it had so many good parts. The same player also commented that Mrs. Drew had a habit of "hunting up old comedies and dramas that made new members of the company memory-sore and heartsick." He said that an actor who did not know a role, "had to learn and be able to reel off his part perfectly with a change for every night."⁶³ In thirteen days, Mrs. Drew, brought up in the old stock company tradition, played seventeen different roles.⁶⁴ She probably expected her company members to do likewise. This practice may, indeed, have accounted in part for the statement disparaging the company's talent the previous season. The players new to roles doubtless only had time to learn their lines and could do very little about working up a characterization. The older stock

⁶³ Stull, 374.

⁶⁴ The Inquirer, September 3-17, 1864. There are also some playbills extant for the season, American Playbills, II, Rare Book Collection, University of Pennsylvania Library. It is not a complete collection and is dated September 5, 1864-May 12, 1865.

players already knew the roles in the older plays and could "get up" in them again with a little review and practice. Also, they were more proficient in their particular lines by virtue of their longer experience, and they knew stage business which would help to develop their roles.

Stull imparted the information that as early as 1864 Mrs. Drew was known about the theatre by the nickname which was applied to her for some years: This is his story:

The Duchess was the familiar sobriquet by which the members of the company permitted themselves to refer to Mrs. Drew--when she was not present. But they all sincerely liked her. Her manner was a blending of the kindness of Marie Antoinette with the imperiousness of Queen Elizabeth, and she was one of the best-hearted women in the business. As a manager she was absolutely just, and it was because she was so strict that she was able to maintain the discipline for which she was famous, and that too, at a time when the supply of actors was far short of the demand.

Nearly every member of the company was constantly in apprehension of the Duchess. She used to sit in a box and watch the performance with a hawk's eye that nothing escaped. The only one whom the ordeal failed to inspire with dread was Walter Donaldson. He had a temperament as cold and rigid as ice and a spirit with the firmness of a cavalry sword. With the Duchess sitting in the box before him, her dark eyes aglitter in chill and impartial criticism, Donaldson deliberately neglected his audience and acted straight at her. He did it as much in a spirit of conscious ability as in a recurring mood of cool effrontery, and the Duchess, I believe, liked him for it.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Stull, p. 373.

This hardly sounds like a description of the woman who had for some years been praised for her gay, light-heartedness and charming smile. In other words, it seems difficult to imagine Fortunio turning into the Duchess. Her daughter had an explanation for her change of manner when she took over the responsibilities of management:

" . . . Personally my mother was, and is to-day, a woman of extraordinary force of character. The management of a stock company in those days was no easy task, and without a firm and judicious hand at the helm shipwreck was a sure and certain eventuality. Now, my mother not only possesses wide experience, but she has had the faculty of maintaining a discipline which never slackened for a moment. Her talents as an actress gained for her the respect and veneration of the company, and with respect was mingled a dash of wholesome fear, which even the boldest was not ashamed to acknowledge, for she was always just and never tyrannical. Even to us, her children, she never showed the least partiality, and I can distinctly remember the icy politeness of her tone as she would turn to me at rehearsal, when I was gossiping away in a corner as girls will, instead of attending to my cue, and remark:

" 'Now, Miss Drew, if you are quite ready we will resume.' " ⁶⁶

Miss Clara Morris, who played in Mrs. Drew's theatre at a later date also commented upon Mrs. Drew's reputation as a manager:

⁶⁶ An unidentified article by Georgiana Drew Barrymore quoted in "Funeral of Mrs. Drew," The Public Ledger, September 2, 1897.

She was always a wonderful disciplinarian; hers was said to be the last of the green-rooms that used to be considered schools of good manners. Some women descend to bullying to maintain their authority--not so Mrs. Drew. Her armor was a certain chill austerity of manner, her weapon a sharp sarcasm, while her strength lay in her self-control, her self-respect.

He would have been a rarely reckless actor who had ventured to question the authority of "The Duchess" within her own bailiwick.⁶⁷

Stull gave additional insight into Mrs. Drew's handling of her players, and related an interesting anecdote in that connection:

Mrs. Drew had a way of putting up for a long time with things that she felt should be remedied; but little by little, as her patience ebbed, her silence would become more pronounced, like the lull before the storm; then, some day, upon arriving at the theatre, she would walk into the box office and don a certain red paisley shawl which she kept in reserve as one of the most impressive pieces of stage property in the house. It fittingly reflected her mood. So long as that shawl was in evidence, all the people of the Arch, from the stage carpenter to leading man, realized that perfection in the performance of duty was the smallest return they could give for their salaries.⁶⁸

Mrs. Drew's daughter also mentioned the shawl, so apparently she still used it to herald her displeasure some years later when Georgie appeared in her mother's theatre:

⁶⁷ Clara Morris, "The Dressing-Room Reception Where I First Met Ellen Terry and Mrs. John Drew," McClures, XXII (November, 1903), p. 210.

⁶⁸ Stull, p. 374.

"I remember, too, the state of ludicrous alarm into which we all used to fall when she was seen coming from the front of the house to the stage with a certain red shawl folded tightly across her shoulders. She only wore this when something had gone wrong, and we used to term it the danger signal."⁶⁹

Stull also related an incident in which a player allegedly had the temerity to address Mrs. Drew by her given name:

I think I have conveyed the impression that Mrs. Drew was a woman with whom no one ever ventured on a familiarity that was undue. But Matt Snyder⁷⁰ was a cheerful, jubilant exception to the rest of the company. He had too the habit of tardiness to a pronounced degree. If there was a virtue on which Mrs. Drew particularly insisted, it was punctuality. Her rule of promptness, the company knew, was to be as rigidly kept as the early Puritans kept the Blue Laws. We had been called for rehearsal one Sunday morning and we waited a half hour before Snyder came in, brisk and smiling.

His only warning of the tempest that was brewing was the fitful flare from Mrs. Drew's shawl as she paced back and forth among the shadows. She let him reach the center of the group. Drawing her form up to its full height, she observed, in her most majestic tones,--

"I am very sorry, Mr. Snyder, that we must part."

With all the anguish of the separation depicted in his face, Snyder leaned forward, and, with sobs in his voice, exclaimed,--

"Why, Louise [sic], you're not going to leave us?"

⁶⁹ Georgiana Drew Barrymore quoted in The Public Ledger, September 2, 1897.

⁷⁰ No player by this name was listed in the announcement of the company. If Stull witnessed this incident, as he implies, Snyder must have joined the company later. An actor named M. B. Snyder was a member of the company during the 1872-73 season, but it is not known whether he was Matt Snyder and whether Stull was still with the company.

For the space of a second nobody breathed. We instinctively looked at the Duchess. Just for an instant her scintillating eyes looked back into his, that seemed almost tearful in their solicitude. The corners of her mouth twitched. Then, drawing the red shawl closely about her shoulders, she gave the order to proceed with the rehearsal.⁷¹

Mrs. Barrymore repeated this anecdote in a somewhat different version:

"Only once did I ever know of any one brave enough to 'chaff' her. This occasion concerned a comedian who at that time held a somewhat minor position in my mother's company. He had committed some one of the seven deadly sins against discipline, and from the suspicious calmness with which it was greeted he made up his mind that something awful was going to happen. During the remainder of the week my mother was loftily polite to him until Saturday night, which was our "treasury day," he went with the others to receive his weekly stipend in the box office, where my mother always paid salaries in person. When she handed him his allotted sum, she added:

"'I am afraid we shall not be together next season, Mr. So-and-So.'"

Assuming an air of the deepest concern the rash young man replied:

"'What, are you going to leave us, Louisa?'"

"So, at least, the story goes, but I, myself cannot conceive anyone being brave enough to address my mother by her Christian name, and to this extent, at least, discredit the anecdote."⁷²

Whether or not the anecdote was true is of no great importance, it seems that it could have been. The different

⁷¹ Stull, p. 374.

⁷² Georgiana Drew Barrymore quoted in The Public Ledger, September 2, 1897.

versions might only be the result of many repetitions of the story. From both writers, however, we learn that Mrs. Drew was a strict disciplinarian, whose authority was not taken lightly by the members of her company.

Mrs. Drew's handling of the salaries doubtless gave her a closer association with her players and staff than would otherwise have been possible. Apparently Mrs. Drew did not, during her years of active management, turn over all financial details to the business agent and treasurer.

Miss Morris noted that Mrs. Drew's managerial authority was responsible for a quiet, neat and orderly theatre:

And what a Paradise her theatre was to the actress who wore fine costumes--such immaculate cleanliness from footlights straight to the buikding's walls! The floor was scrubbed to a creamy purity, everything that could possibly bear a coat of white paint had it; cellars and darksome corners, usually reserved for the propagation of spiders and evil musty odors, responded wholesomely to the healthful effects of the white-wash brush. Every carpenter, gas-man, scene shifter, property man, in fact every wearer of trousers, save only the actors, wore a suit of white canvas, and every foot was shod in felt while the play was going on-- Oh, the delight and comfort of it all.⁷³

Doubtless Mrs. Drew remembered many of the dirty and uncomfortable theatres in which she performed in her youth and sought to make her house immaculate.

⁷³ Morris, p. 210.

T. Allston Brown said that many old actors told him that Mrs. Drew was the best stage director they had ever seen, and said that the principal stage carpenter of the Arch once said to him with pride, "Why, sir, there ain't a carpenter in the theatre whom she can't sometimes teach how to do a thing." According to Brown, her "glance was everywhere. Her judgment and taste were carried into every department. Her administrative powers remarkable."⁷⁴

The 1864-65 season was notable for the number of performances which the stock company made without the help of outside stars. In addition to the initial thirteen nights of comedy, the company played a round of comedies again from February 6 through February 18. The February 15 performance was a benefit for the sufferers of a local fire, and all members of the company volunteered their services. Mrs. Drew took the customary star's benefit when she appeared with the company.⁷⁵

Boucicault's spectacular piece, The Streets of New York was brought out on February 20 and played through March 4. Early in March the Inquirer reported that the production "continues to draw large audiences at this theatre every evening. It is put upon the stage and played

⁷⁴ Brown, "Mrs. John Drew," p. 133.

⁷⁵ The Inquirer, February 6-18, 1865.

in a very creditable manner."⁷⁶ The play was revived on May 1, and the same newspaper reported:

. . . At the time of its first presentation it created a dramatic furor and proved highly successful, both in a dramatic and pecuniary point of view. The piece will be brought out, and with its excellent cast is well worth seeing.⁷⁷

During the revival, some of the actors took their benefits and appeared in prominent roles in the after-pieces presented with it. This was a rather unusual procedure, for actors usually selected special plays for their benefit nights.⁷⁸

On May 29, the actress-manager and her company opened in An Unequal Match.⁷⁹ Mrs. Drew appeared in the role of Hester Glazebrook.⁸⁰

The first visiting star of the season was Edwin Adams, who acted in Hamlet, The Lady of Lyons, The Heretic, Wild Oats, The Marble Heart, The King of the Commons, and The Dead Heart.⁸¹

In April, Adams returned again and was seen in a dramatization of Enoch Arden as well as in some plays acted

⁷⁶ Ibid., March 3, 1865. This piece ran from February 20 through March 4, 1865.

⁷⁷ Ibid., May 1, 1865.

⁷⁸ Ibid., May 1-13, 1865.

⁷⁹ Ibid., May 29-June 9, 1865.

⁸⁰ The Times-Philadelphia, May 8, 1897.

⁸¹ The Inquirer, September 19-October 1, 1864.

during his first engagement.⁸² His last night was announced for April 15, but the theatre was closed that night because of the assassination of President Lincoln. The new Arch Street Theatre Advertisement noted the fact that both the Mrs. Drew's and Mrs. Garrettson's theatres would close:

The public are respectfully notified that as a humble tribute to the memory of our late HONORED CHIEF MAGISTRATE, this Theatre will be closed until further notice.

Louisa Drew

I concur in the above.

M. A. Garrettson
Lessee and Manageress of the Walnut Street Theatre⁸³
The other legitimate house, the Chestnut Street Theatre, also closed. President Lincoln's body was brought to Philadelphia on April 22, and special services were held. On the following Monday, April 24, the theatres opened again.⁸⁴

The second star of the season at the New Arch Street Theatre was Vestvali, "a Great Lyric Artist." Following her first appearance in Brougham's Bel Demonio, the Inquirer pronounced this a piece "to gratify the tastes of the lovers of the sensational." The reviewer praised

⁸² Ibid., April 3-15, 1865.

⁸³ Ibid., April 15, 1865.

⁸⁴ Ibid., April 15-24, 1865.

the scenery and appointments which were "all the most exacting could desire." He also called her singing a pleasant feature. Vestvali also appeared in The Brigand and Julia de Marguerittes' new play, Gemea, the Hebrew Fortune Teller.⁸⁵

Several performers who had had successful engagements in other seasons returned this year. Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams played two engagements.⁸⁶ J. S. Clarke again played an extended engagement.⁸⁷ Caroline Richings' opera troupe treated music lovers to more English opera.⁸⁸ Charlotte Thompson acted favorite roles,⁸⁹ and Frank Drew appeared in his farces and burlesques.⁹⁰

A new player to appear at Mrs. Drew's house for the first time was L. P. Barrett, better known later as Lawrence Barrett. Miss Annie Graham, who joined the company late in the season, played the leading feminine role

⁸⁵ Ibid., October 3-29, 1864.

⁸⁶ Ibid., October 31-November 26, 1864 and March 20-April 1, 1865.

⁸⁷ Ibid., November 28, 1864-January 7, 1865.

⁸⁸ Ibid., January 9-21, May 15-27, 1865. Miss Richings added several operas to her repertoire this season including Norma.

⁸⁹ Ibid., April 24-29, 1865.

⁹⁰ Ibid., June 26-July 8, 1865. One of Drew's burlesques was of a melodrama which had been popular at another house during the season, East Lynne.

in a dramatization of Enoch Arden called Under the Palm, The Lady of Lyons, The Marble Heart, Money, King of the Commons, Hamlet, Othello, and The Robbers.⁹¹

While Barrett was at the Arch, he and members of Mrs. Drew's company appeared at an interesting testimonial benefit for Charles S. Porter, veteran Philadelphia actor and manager who was seriously ill. The managers of the three leading theatres, Mrs. Drew, Mrs. Garrettson, and W. K. Sinn cooperated in the benefit. The feature play of the evening was a production of Julius Caesar with E. L. Davenport as Brutus, J. W. Wallack, Jr. as Cassius, and Barrett as Mark Antony. The cast was made up of players from the three theatres. The Richings Opera Troupe contributed to the program, and Frank Drew presented his burlesque of Camille. The comedy, Married Life was presented with the first act given by the Arch Street Company, the second act by the Walnut, and the third by the Chestnut.⁹²

An actress who made her first appearance under Mrs. Drew's management this season was Mrs. F. W. Lander, the former Miss J. M. Davenport. She was seen in such plays as Adrienne the Actress, The Mesalliance, Charlotte

⁹¹ Ibid., January 23-February 4, 1865.

⁹² Ibid., January 27, 1865.

Gorday, and Love, or the Countess and the Serf.⁹³

Miss Ada and Miss Emma Webb performed an engagement in June. A typical program was Po-ca-hon-tas, A Day Too Late and A Regular Fix. The advertisement said that they appeared in eight characters, sixteen songs and dances. The Misses Webb played a two-weeks' engagement.⁹⁴ The last night of the season was July 8.⁹⁵

The house opened again on July 10 for the minstrel season, a period in which minstrel companies made appearances in legitimate houses. Miss Effie Henderson was featured.⁹⁶ It is not known whether Mrs. Drew was responsible for booking these summer season programs, or whether she merely rented the house to minstrel companies. Sometimes the advertisements read "Mrs. John Drew's Arch Street Theatre," while more often they were headed "Arch Street Theatre" during the summer minstrel season.

The company for the 1864-65 season seems to have been a stronger one than that of the previous season, and Mrs. Drew and the group appeared in many plays without the benefit of star assistance. When stars did appear, they

⁹³ Ibid., March 6-18, 1865.

⁹⁴ Ibid., June 12-24, 1865.

⁹⁵ Ibid., July 8, 1865.

⁹⁶ Ibid., July 10-24, 1865.

seemed able to support them successfully. From time to time during the season Mrs. Drew was again praised by the press for her attention to detail in regard to staging her plays. Again this season, the manager gave her patrons a wide variety in entertainment.

Before the end of the season Mrs. Drew lost her veteran stage manager, Fredericks. Edwin Booth and his brother-in-law, J. S. Clarke, bought the Walnut Street Theatre and hired Fredericks as their stage manager for the next season, and as soon as Mrs. Drew heard that he had been engaged by a rival house, she dismissed him from her employ. According to Stull:

. . . the news reached Mrs. Drew and she called him to the office in June and said "Mr. Fredericks I do not think it is a good business policy for me to retain longer as my stage manager the man who is to be the stage manager of a rival theatre."

He reminded her of his contract, but she told him to make up his accounts and paid him off.⁹⁷

Mrs. Drew had worked under Clarke's management and had had him play in her theatre and was very well acquainted with him. Doubtless she knew at this early date that competition would be keen when he and Booth took over a theatre. Also, she would have to compete with theatre owners who operated under a different type of managerial strategy from that which she had encountered

⁹⁷ Stull, p. 378.

thus far. Stull had this to say about the new managers of the Walnut:

. . . Both owners, interested in the new undertaking, were prepared to spend any amount of money to place their theatre in the lead and assure their triumph. Their first move was a shrewd one. Clarke made a special arrangement with all the hotels in Philadelphia whereby they agreed to send their guests to the Walnut, recommending it as the best theatre in the city. It was a clever advertising stroke on which not even the twentieth century could have improved. If the Walnut were not already the best theatre, that one advantage gave it the opportunity to become so.

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They hired Edwin Forrest for \$600 a night for a ten-night engagement (two weeks--five nights a week.) They used every art to exploit Forrest's engagement. After Forrest, the Walnut had Booth, Joe Jefferson and John Brougham. They were a succession of attractions whose prestige no stock company, however perfect, could hope to rival.⁹⁸

The loyal former actor from Mrs. Drew's theatre said that Clarke knew how a playhouse should be managed. "He had learned it from hard experience as well as from observing the woman who had done it better than any man in the country."⁹⁹

Before this season closed, then, the actress-manager had to look ahead to stronger competition than she had encountered to date.

Mrs. Drew began the 1865-66 season as she had the one the previous year; the company played thirteen nights

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 377, 378.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 377.

without the assistance of outside stars. Mrs. Drew had three new people in the company this season, who were later to achieve success as stars. All three, McKee Rankin,¹⁰⁰ F. F. Mackay, and Louis L. James, had never appeared in Philadelphia before this season. Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Greese joined the company this season, and Wallis, Marlow, Robson, Craig, and Miss Price were among the players from the previous season to return. Arch Street Theatre patrons welcomed the Henris, who had been absent for several seasons. Dodworth and Murphy were still on the staff in their old positions. The new stage manager was W. A. Moore.¹⁰¹

The Philadelphia "first-nighters" were probably not at all surprised to find that The School for Scandal was again the opening program. The Inquirer made this report of the event:

¹⁰⁰ Rankin later married Miss Kitty Blanchard and the two starred successfully as Mr. and Mrs. McKee Rankin for a number of years. One of their most successful plays was The Danites. Two of their daughters married into Mrs. Drew's family, Gladys becoming the wife of Sidney Drew and Doris marrying Lionel Barrymore.

¹⁰¹ The Inquirer, September 4, 1865. There are also some playbills for this season, although by no means a complete collection in American Playbills, II, Rare Book Collection, University of Pennsylvania Library.

The New Arch Street Theatre presented a most brilliant scene on Saturday night, the opening of the season. Mrs. John Drew, the popular lessee, met with a perfect ovation, and was kept standing on the stage for several minutes while the most enthusiastic plaudits were being showered upon her. Mr. McKee Rankin, the leading young man, was well received, and gave great satisfaction. He will become very popular. He is somewhat of the Lester Wallack style. Mr. E. L. Tilton was warmly welcomed and performed admirably. Messrs. Stuart Robson, Wallis, Mackay, Marlowe, Mrs. C. Henri, Mrs. Worrell, etc. were all applauded, and the orchestra under the popular Dodworth did splendidly.¹⁰²

Other plays included in the first days of the season were Old Heads and Young Hearts, The Rivals, Wives As They Were and Maids As They Are, The Jealous Wife, Know Your Own Mind, How She Loves Him, and The Willow Copse. Miss Price played the leading role in the last-named play, and Mrs. Drew acted it in all the others. Then Rosedale played for a week. Mrs. Drew took Friday night benefits as if she were a visiting star.¹⁰³ Rosedale was performed a second week in December in order to fill a vacancy in the schedule, which was made by the indisposition of James E. Murdoch, who was to have appeared at that time.¹⁰⁴

On Christmas, Mrs. Drew produced a play by Watts Phillips called Lost in London. The Inquirer first reported:

¹⁰² Ibid., September 4, 1865.

¹⁰³ Ibid., September 3-16, 1865.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., December 11-16, 1865.

Lost in London is a success. . . . Mrs. Drew is excellent as "Nelly Armroyd," as is McKee Rankin in "Job," though the character is rather a heavy one for him. Marlowe is of course irreproachable as "Featherstone," and Robson very funny as the tiger.¹⁰⁵

And on January 2, the same newspaper noted:

The splendid way in which Lost in London has been brought out at the Arch has insured its entire success, and it continues the prime attraction at that theatre. The plot is absorbingly interesting, and Mrs. Drew as "Nelly" the heroine is excellent. McKee Rankin as "Job" Armroyd has the most important character in the play and renders it with marked ability. Marlowe and Robson are admirable in their respective parts, and the minor characters are well acted. Lost in London, now in its second week, shows no diminution in the crowded houses it draws.

If the reports of crowded houses were true, then Mrs. Drew's theatre must have been able to meet competition very well at this time. On January 5, Mrs. Drew's acting was given commendation:

The touching domestic drama, Lost in London, is proving attractive at this house. Mrs. Drew as "Nelly Armroyd," proves that her histrionic abilities are still in their pristine vigor; her conception and acting of the part entitle her to wear the laurels she earned on the stage of this self same theatre a dozen years ago. . . . The play is well put upon the stage; what play at the Arch is not?¹⁰⁶

On January 12, one of Mrs. Drew's benefit nights, a new play was presented for the first time in the city. It was Craven's The Needful. Both this play and Lost in

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., December 27, 1865.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., January 5, 1866.

London had been produced at Wallack's in New York. Apparently Mrs. Drew had acquired the rights to the Philadelphia productions.¹⁰⁷

Fortunio was the next piece brought to the stage, and Mrs. Drew was again seen in the role which she had created in this country more than twenty years before. Several days after the opening, the Inquirer reported that the play still continued to attract large and highly pleased crowds. He also said:

Mrs. John Drew as "Fortunio," is, as this estimable and talented lady is in everything she essays, admirable. The piece is remarkably well placed upon the stage, but notwithstanding its success, it must be withdrawn at the end of the week to make way for Miss Jean Hosmer.¹⁰⁸

Frequently stock company productions suffered this fate. They had to give way to the star which had been booked.

New scenery, machinery, and costumes were used to make the production effective, and Miss Rosa Wood, danseuse, was engaged to give effect to the ballet introduced in the piece.¹⁰⁹ Charles Henri doubtless staged the dances and tableaux.

The Streets of New York was revived in March, and

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., January 12, 1866.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., January 17, 1866.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., January 15-20, 1866.

F. S. Chanfrau, who had just completed a starring engagement, joined forces with the company in it. The Inquirer said: "No piece produced in this city for some time has been more successful than The Streets of New York as produced by Chanfrau and company." The same play was given another production on May 5 without the benefit of Chanfrau.¹¹⁰

On May 28, an announcement appeared which stated that the public would be glad to learn that "Mrs. John Drew, the efficient and vastly popular lessee and manageress of the New Arch Street Theatre" would appear "this and every week."¹¹¹ The Needful was presented on that night and the one following. The other new play, Lost in London, was given another presentation, and for the first time in five years, Mrs. Drew was Lady Gay Spanker in London Assurance. This was followed by several other plays which had furnished her with roles in the past: Nine Points of the Law, Agnes de Vere, The Dead Shot, and Victorine. The series of plays was interrupted for four days for star appearances, then the actress-manager took over the stage again when the star, Miss Lucy Rushton, became indisposed.¹¹² The Inquirer, in commenting upon

¹¹⁰ Ibid., March 10-16, May 5, 1866.

¹¹¹ Ibid., May 28, 1866.

¹¹² Ibid., May 28-June 2, and June 8-10, 1866.

the shift of programs, declared that Mrs. Drew appeared again "much to the delight of the patrons of the Arch." She was seen in Giralda and Grist to the Mill.¹¹³

Stuart Robson, who had been receiving good notices for his work at Mrs. Drew's theatre, left the company in May. His name last appeared in a cast list for the third of that month, and on May 10, Sam Hemple, another low comedian, took over his place. (Mrs. Drew had played with him at the Arch in earlier days.) On June 9, the same day in which Mrs. Drew appeared in Grist to the Mill, a farewell benefit was given to Stuart Robson at the Academy of Music. The reason for Robson's departure from the Arch before the end of the season is not known. Several players from Mrs. Drew's theatre appeared on his benefit program including Griffiths, Rankin, Stull, Tilton, Fitzgerald, and Miss Price. Some years later Robson appeared again in the actress-manager's theatre, so if there had been any difficulty between actor and manager, it must have been forgotten later. Probably her players did not appear at his benefit without her consent.¹¹⁴

Several stars, who had appeared the previous season, were again seen at the Arch. Edwin Adams acted in a new play

¹¹³ Ibid., May 3-June 9, 1866.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., June 9, 1866.

called The Serf. Mrs. Lander appeared as Adrienne, Peg Woffington, Joan of Arc, and Mrs. Haller during her engagement. Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams presented Charles Gayler's The Connie Soogah, or Wearing of the Green, which had had a great run in New York. Lawrence Barrett opened in The Duke's Motto, and was seen in The Lady of Lyons, The Robbers, The Marble Heart, and Richard III.¹¹⁵

Two of Mrs. Drew's old friends appeared as stars this season, Madame Celeste and James E. Murdoch. The once great dancer appeared in some of her old productions, St. Mary's Eve, and The French Spy, pieces in which, as the Inquirer pointed out, "in her youthful days she particularly excelled." The same newspaper stated that "while the 'star' is not, of course, what she was in years gone by, her performances are highly entertaining and well worth seeing." She was also seen in Buckstone's Green Bushes during this engagement.¹¹⁶ In the spring she returned and danced in The Flying Dutchman and St. Mark's Eve.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Ibid., (Adams) September 18-30, 1865), (Lander) October 2-14, 1865, (Williams) October 15-November 25, 1865, (Barrett) April 16-21, 1866.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., November 27-December 9, 1865. The review quoted above appeared on the last day.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., April 23-May 4, 1866.

New scenery, costumes, and the like were advertised for her productions, so apparently Mrs. Drew saw that the dancer, with whom she had performed as a girl, had well-mounted productions in her theatre.

James E. Murdoch was first scheduled to appear on December 11, but was unable to appear because of illness. He was next advertised for December 18, but could not fulfill that engagement either. Finally he began making appearances on April 2, his first on the Philadelphia stage in many years. He appeared in Wild Oats, Hamlet, Money, and The Dramatist, and was well received.¹¹⁸ On April 4, it was reported that Murdoch's first appearance at Mrs. Drew's theatre "constituted a gala night at that popular place of amusement. The house was crowded from parquette to dome."¹¹⁹ Somewhat later the same newspaper commented:

This establishment has secured a trump card in Mr. Murdoch, and he nightly fills the auditorium with those anxious to assure themselves that the sterling actor of their youth has lost none of his pristine vigor.¹²⁰

Charles Dillon, an English actor whom Mrs. Drew had supported many years before, was booked for an engagement this season, also. For the first week, he was seen in his old role of Belphegor, the mountebank, in the play

¹¹⁸ Ibid., April 2-13, 1866.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., April 4, 1866.

¹²⁰ Ibid., April 11, 1866.

of that name. Also during his engagement, he appeared in A New Way to Pay Old Debts, Virginius, and King Lear. His reviews were favorable.¹²¹

F. S. Chanfrau, who has already been mentioned, was seen in his famous impersonation of Sam this season. Chanfrau was supported by Miss Olive Logan, C. T. Parsloe, and DeWalden, the author of Sam in addition to the Arch Street company. A review published March 3, called this piece "one of the greatest successes of modern times," and said that it was one of "the most delightful bits of stage comicality which has been presented to the theatrical community in a long time."¹²² A later report stated that the theatre was crowded.¹²³

Four actresses new to the Arch Street Theatre stage appeared during the season. The first was Madame Penisi, who seemingly was engaged to support Murdoch when he was first scheduled to appear. When he was forced to cancel his engagement because of illness, the lady appeared in a round of her own favorite characters. She was Lady Teazle, Pauline, and Juliana, and Lady Macbeth.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Ibid., March 19-30, 1866.

¹²² Ibid., March 3, 1866.

¹²³ Ibid., March 9, 1866. Chanfrau's three-week engagement lasted from February 19-March 9, 1866.

¹²⁴ Ibid., December 18-24, 1865.

Miss Jean Hosmer, heralded as "a brilliant young tragedienne," appeared in roles in plays popular with stars: Lucretia Borgis, Camille, Fazio, Evadne, Love, Ingomar, and The Stranger.¹²⁵

Mrs. Emma Waller followed Miss Hosmer. She brought her husband along for support. Mrs. Waller, who was quite a popular actress, played Marina in the seldom produced The Duchess of Malfi. She also acted Lady Macbeth and Meg Merrilies. These last two roles were favorites, as is well known, of Miss Charlotte Cushman. It would seem that Mrs. Waller invited comparison with the great tragedienne, for she also appeared in Hamlet. During the engagement, the visiting actress appeared as Iago to her husband's Othello.¹²⁶

Miss Lucy Rushton, a young English actress appeared in May opening on May 21 as Rosaline. She also played Lady Teazle during the engagement which was shortened by her illness. The Inquirer said that she was "the most fascinating actress to appear herefor a long time. She is both talented and beautiful--a rare combination." It was also noted that her engagement was a success, and that the Arch was filled every evening.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Ibid., January 22-February 3, 1866.

¹²⁶ Ibid., February 5-17, 1866.

¹²⁷ Ibid., May 26, 1866. Miss Rushton's appearances were May 21-~~26~~ or 27, June 4-6. No advertisement appeared on June 7 and 8, and Mrs. Drew was announced for June 9.

Miss Fannie V. Tilton, daughter of one of the actors, made her debut on March 31 at her father's benefit. Mrs. Drew gave her a second chance to appear in May during one of the weeks set aside for benefit performances of the other players.¹²⁸ A complimentary testimonial was given for Miss Noeme de Marguerittes, daughter of the playwright, Mme. de Marguerittes.¹²⁹ It is not known why Mrs. Drew wished to honor the young woman, for she was not a member of the company. Perhaps she wished to give the young singer aid in her career. During the time benefits were given, Mrs. Drew did not forget her brother-in-law, Frank Drew. Although he was not a member of the company, and he did not have a starring engagement at her house this season, he was given a "grand farewell benefit" before he departed for another trip to Europe.¹³⁰

The dramatic season ended on June 9, and Miss Ettie Henderson, the protean comedienne, returned for two weeks again this summer. She was followed by Robert Heller, conjurer and pianist, who also performed for two weeks. It is not known whether they appeared under Mrs. Drew's management, or whether they rented the house.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Ibid., March 31, May 12, 1866.

¹²⁹ Ibid., May 8, 1866.

¹³⁰ Ibid., May 19, 1866.

¹³¹ Ibid., June 11-July 17, 1866.

During her operation of the theatre this season, Mrs. Drew again gave her patrons variety in entertainment. She had a strong company and was able to revive several old plays that had not been produced for several years, and could produce comedies which seemed to be perennial favorites. Mrs. Drew also presented several plays new to Philadelphia audiences, and they were well received. Although her stars for the season did not have the lustre of Booth and Forrest, who appeared at the rival Walnut, she nonetheless had some respectable performers in several different lines. The lady manager gave several older players a chance to be seen again in Philadelphia, and made it possible for several new players to appear. The care with which her productions were placed upon the stage continued to receive favorable comments in the press this season, and if we are to believe newspaper reports, good-sized audiences attended the theatre. Seemingly, then, she was able to meet the new competition satisfactorily this season.

Mrs. Drew doubtless surprised the patrons of her theatre when she opened it September 1, 1866 with a play other than The School for Scandal. This season she selected The Belle's Stratagem and The Race for a Widow. She appeared in both. New members of the company this season included Frank Mordaunt, who replaced McKee Rankin, and Miss A. Denin. Roland Reed, who was listed in opening

advertisements, may have been the Mr. Reed of the previous season. Many strong players of the previous season returned including Mrs. Thayer, Miss Price, Miss Creese, Marlowe, Craig, Hemple, Wallis, Creese, James, and Griffiths. Some of the bit players, as a Miss Summerfield, seemed to stay on season after season. That actress's name appeared during Mrs. Drew's first season as manager. Dodworth was still musical director, Murphy continued as the business manager, but no stage manager was listed at the opening of the season.¹³²

The Inquirer reported that "Mrs. John Drew and her new company received a most flattering welcome on Saturday evening from a large, fashionable audience."¹³³

Mrs. Drew was inclined to break tradition in several respects this season, for instead of continuing with revivals of old comedies, she presented a new play for the second production. It was Westland Marston's The Favorite of Fortune, and Mrs. Drew was seen in the role of Hester Lorrington. The Inquirer noted that the play had been carefully prepared, and said that the play would be put on the stage "in the superior style for which this theatre is famous."¹³⁴ It was performed four times, then

¹³² Ibid., September 1, 1866.

¹³³ Ibid., September 2, 1866.

¹³⁴ Ibid., September 3, 1866.

Mrs. Drew and the company were seen in The Jealous Wife and Up in the Hills. The afterpieces on the last two occasions were Therese and The Drunkard.¹³⁵

The company and the actress-manager were then seen in six productions of The Fast Family. Mrs. Drew was the rich widow. The run of the play was interrupted by the appearance of a visiting star; then the play was given six more productions and was revived once in

January.¹³⁶ On October 22, a notice said that the piece was being produced simultaneously in London, Paris, and New York.¹³⁷ Apparently it was popular in Philadelphia.

The stock company appeared in another new play, Women Will Talk, late in October. This play, DeWalden's comedy "from the French" afforded Mrs. Drew another new role, that of Mrs. Belle Gabberton. In noting her benefit performance, which she continued to take on Friday nights the same as a visiting star, the Inquirer mentioned her "capital impersonation of 'Mrs. Belle Gabberton' in the great play Women Will Talk" which had "greatly added to her dramatic fame."¹³⁸ The play was withdrawn after a week's run to make way for a new attraction.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Ibid., September 3-8, 1866.

¹³⁶ Ibid., October 1-6, 22-27, 1866 and January 12, 1867.

¹³⁷ Ibid., October 22, 1866.

¹³⁸ Ibid., November 2, 1866.

¹³⁹ Ibid., October 29-November 3, 1866.

Another new play, Griffith Gaunt, or Jealousy, appeared for the Christmas season with new scenery, machinery, music, and so on. It received excellent notices as far as staging and acting were concerned. Mrs. Drew was in the role of Kate Peyton, and on one of her benefit nights also appeared in The Miseries of Human Life.¹⁴⁰

The next new play followed almost immediately. It was Byron's £100,000. During its run, Mrs. Drew appeared in the role of Alice Barlow, and also was seen in two plays that served as afterpieces, The Honeymoon and Rob Roy.¹⁴¹

The most popular new play produced by the company this season was T. W. Robertson and Artemus Ward's Ours. It was first presented on February 25 with new scenery, military costumes and various effects. The Inquirer said of this production:

. . . It is placed upon the stage in a style deserving of great praise--one which gives full effect to every situation invented by its witty author. A full military band is introduced on the stage, and movements of a body of troops by moonlight gives intense reality to the play. Mrs. John Drew herself sustains the character of "Mary Netley," supported by her excellent company.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., December 24, 1866-January 11, 1867.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., January 14-19, 1867.

¹⁴² Ibid., February 27, 1867.

A short time later the same newspaper had praise for the mounting of the piece and comments concerning audience reactions:

One of the most extraordinary and successful dramas ever presented to an American audience, is now nightly filling the New Arch Street Theatre to its utmost capacity. The piece is creating a great sensation throughout the city, and some of the scenes nightly create the greatest furore and excitement. The moonlight march of the troops is one of the finest scenic effects ever produced on the stage. Mrs. John Drew sustains the character of Mary Netley and constitutes the entire evening's entertainment.¹⁴³

The last remark is rather ambiguous in view of the fact that the reviewer seemed also to find the piece of pictorial interest. The run was interrupted several times for benefit performances during March, and was given its twenty-ninth and last performance on April 5.¹⁴⁴

John Drew later reminisced about this play in his autobiography:

Upon the invitation of my mother Charles Dickens visited the Arch Street Theatre and saw a performance of Ours. This piece of Tom Robertson's was always in the repertoire, just as it was at Wallack's, and was a great favorite of my mother's. In asking Dickens to come to the theatre my mother assured him that his visit would not be made known in advance, and that he need not fear that he would be annoyed by curious crowds. He wrote her a very gracious and charming letter thanking her.¹⁴⁵

Two of the players' benefits were of interest

¹⁴³ Ibid., March 8, 1867.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., February 25-March 21, 25, 27, 28, April 1, 3, 5, 1867.

¹⁴⁵ Drew, My Years on the Stage, pp. 27-28.

Two of the players' benefits were of interest because of the actors who volunteered in their behalf. At Robert Craig's, Barton Hill and Stuart Robson, former members of the company appeared.¹⁴⁶ Craig wrote many burlesques, which were used as afterpieces at Mrs. Drew's theatres. At Sam Hemple's benefit, Frank Drew made his only appearance of the season.¹⁴⁷

Several stars who had appeared other seasons returned again this year. Chanfrau was again seen in his popular characterization, Sam, and also acted in Our American Cousin, The Toodles, The People's Lawyer, and Robert Macaire. Edwin Adams appeared in a new sensational play adapted from a French drama. It was called Clairvoyance, or the Man with the Wax Figures. He was also seen in some of his old roles. James W. Wallack, Jr. appeared as a single star rather than in a combination and acted in A Dangerous Game and Oliver Twist. Irish pieces continued to be popular and Mrs. Drew booked Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Florence and Dan Bryant.¹⁴⁸

The actress-manager seemed to wish to give her patrons something different in the way of entertainment, for she also booked Mr. and Mrs. Howard Paul, "protean

¹⁴⁶ The Inquirer, March 23, 1867.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., April 6, 1867.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., (Chanfrau) December 10-22, 1866 (Adams) April 8-20, 1867, (Wallack) May 6-11, 1867, (Florence) September 10-29, 1866, (Bryant) May 13-25, 1867.

and lyric artists" from England, G. L. Fox, a pantomimist, and Lady Don, an English burlesque actress. All were well received, particularly Fox, who must have been something of a sensation. His pantomime Jack and Gill [sic], was produced thirty-five times during his first engagement. He returned early in the summer and appeared in Little Boy Blue, which ran three weeks, and a new pantomime called M. Dechalameau and the Four Lovers.¹⁴⁹ A new actor, billed as a tragedian, Daniel E. Bandmann, was introduced and was well received despite the fact that Booth, supported by Barton Hill, was playing tragedies at the Walnut at the same time. Bandmann appeared in Destiny and The Robbers.¹⁵⁰

Apparently Mrs. Drew decided to meet the competition by giving her patrons a number of new plays, and by presenting new personalities and novelty entertainment such as would not be seen at the Chestnut, which at this time specialized in long-run sensational melodramas, or the Walnut, which featured "name" stars in repertoires made up mostly of classics. She probably thought, and wisely, too, that it would be impossible to bring in anyone to compete with Booth, for example, so she did not do so.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., (Paul) November 26-December 9, 1866, (Fox) January 21-February 23 and June 3-July 4, 1867, (Don) April 22-May 4, 1867.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., October 8-20, 1866.

Instead, she attempted to present a variety of pieces well staged at her house in the hope that she could continue to attract people to her theatre and apparently she succeeded. Even though the population of the city was growing, there was a limit to the number of times one would wish to see the same great actor in one season, or patronize a theatre whose offerings were sensational melodrama. There evidently were many people who welcomed the variety of Mrs. Drew's house, and this season also seems to have been successful.

CHAPTER VIII

ACTRESS-MANAGER, STAR-STOCK THEATRE (1867-1872)

Patrons who attended the opening performance of the 1867-68 season at Mrs. John Drew's New Arch Street Theatre, doubtless felt more at home than at the opening of the previous season, for The School for Scandal was once again the opening play. No large advertisement listing all the company appeared at the beginning of this season, so that all the new players are not known. From a check of advertisements, reviews, and playbills, however, several new names were noted, among them Mr. and Mrs. Charles Walcott, Jr., and Adam Everly. Old members on hand included Mrs. Thayer, Miss Price, Mrs. Creese, Mordaunt, Hample, Craig, Mackay, Reed, and Barton Hill. The latter, after playing roles with Booth at the Walnut, joined the company late in the season. Joseph D. Murphy was again business agent and treasurer, and E. F. Taylor was the stage director.¹

A review of the opening performance, which included The Dumb Belle as the afterpiece, spoke of the "brilliant fashionable and delighted audience." The reviewer commented that the company was excellent and that the play had never

¹ The Inquirer, September 7, 1867-June 20, 1868.

(Continued)

been performed more satisfactorily in Philadelphia.²

The stock company was not featured again until November, when Olive Logan's new play, Surf, was brought out. Mrs. Drew was the heroine, Mrs. Madison Noble, and the piece used "every member of the large and talented company."³ After Miss Logan's play had been running a few days, this review appeared:

There is no abatement in the popular desire to see the new and remarkably taking play of Surf at the New Arch Street Theatre as the crowded houses nightly testify.

The piece has fairly taken hold of the popular mind, and will attract large audiences for weeks to come. The management deserves great credit for the admirable manner, in which the piece is produced. The scenic effects are new and surprising, and this constitutes the principal attractions of the piece, and is in fact its salvation. The characters are all admirably sustained.⁴

John Drew also mentioned the production of this play:

Occasionally there was a play that was called "a production," and required, because of its elaborateness, a good many extra rehearsals. One such, called

¹ (Continued) A few playbills for Mrs. Drew's theatre are extant for this season in American Playbills, II, Rare Book Collection, University of Pennsylvania Library. The names of the two staff members were taken from playbills dated September, 1867.

² The Inquirer, September 9, 1867.

³ Ibid., November 4, 1867.

⁴ Ibid., November 13, 1867. The play ran from November 4-30, 1867.

Surf, by Olive Logan, I remember distinctly. The scene was at Cape May, then a fashionable place for Philadelphians to go. Breakers were made by white cotton cloth and barrels. Just how it was arranged I do not know, but in spite of the fact that the play was rather indifferent, it had a run of eight weeks, which at that time was considered a long run. Augustin Daly bought the rights for New York, where he produced it with some share of success.⁵

Another new play, which aroused a great deal of interest to Philadelphians, was one written by Col. Fitzgerald, a newspaper editor. It was called Light at Last or the Shadow on the Casement, and was given a spectacular production by the Arch Street Company. The Inquirer printed this account of the opening night:

The largest and most discriminating audience seen within the walls of a theatre in Philadelphia in years, was present at the initial performance of Col. Fitzgerald's new play, Light at Last last evening at the Arch. Every seat in the building was occupied, and hundreds of standers crowded the aisles, remaining "firm at their posts" from the beginning to the close of the performance. The play, "for a first night," was a success, and many of its dramatic points were highly enjoyed by the audience.

Considerable tact and talent is displayed in its construction, and in a literary point of view it is a credible production. It was placed upon the stage and acted in the best possible manner, Mrs. Drew, Miss Lizzie Price and Mr. and Mrs. Walcott performing their respective roles admirably.

. . . The scenery is good and effective, and the music composed for it by Mr. Fairlamb, of this city excellent. The play will be acted every evening until further notice, and its brilliant beginning argues a successful

⁵ Drew, My Life on the Stage, pp. 34, 35. Drew errs in citing the number of productions. It seems only to have had twenty-six performances rather than eight weeks.

run for it. Mr. Fitzgerald was loudly called for at the end of the performance. . . .⁶

Mrs. Drew honored Col. Fitzgerald with an author's night, a rather unusual occurrence in the theatre of that day, according to one newspaper. Even though it was playing to large audiences, it was withdrawn after a matinee performance on January 11 to make way for a benefit and another engagement.⁷

The company produced another new play in March called Maud's Peril. The leading role, Lady Maud, was played by Mrs. Drew. Both the acting and scenery were praised for this play and there were reports of crowded houses during its run.⁸

In April, Mrs. Drew brought out Tom Robertson's Play [sic]. The Inquirer thought that it was a better one as far as literary production was concerned than "the trashy stuff we have of late been surfeited with." The same newspaper praised the "liberality of the Arch Street Management" in producing the play, and Mrs. Drew and members of the company were praised for their acting.⁹

⁶ The Inquirer, December 31, 1867.

⁷ Ibid., January 6, 1868. The play was on the boards from December 30, 1867-January 11, 1868 and was revived again March 16, 17, 19, 1868.

⁸ Ibid., March 9-14, 21, 1868.

⁹ Ibid., April 17, 1868. The play ran April 6-17, 1868.

Another new play, Does He Love Me? a comedy by Falconer, was the next presentation. Mrs. Drew's interpretation of Miss Vandeleur was called "a delightful piece of acting" and the play was pronounced "a brilliant success."¹⁰

In A Wife Well Won, said to have been a drama based upon the French Revolution, Mrs. Drew played a new role. Barton Hill, who returned to her company after several years' absence, played the leading male role.¹¹ Both Mrs. Drew and Hill took benefits, and Mrs. Drew appeared at Hill's. She did not ordinarily appear at the benefits of the regular stock players. At Hill's benefit the actress-manager played in Violet, or the Life of an Actress.¹² Mrs. Drew and Hill were also seen in a revival of The Serious Family. And for the benefit of the American Dramatic Fund given at the Academy of Music, the afternoon of May 30, they appeared in London Assurance.¹³

The company appeared in other revivals during the season and counting new plays, revivals, and benefit performances, the stock organization provided much of the entertainment during the season. Some stars appeared, however,

¹⁰ Ibid., April 23, 1868. The play ran April 20-23, 1868.

¹¹ Ibid., May 18-28, 1868.

¹² Ibid., May 29, 1868.

¹³ Ibid., May 30, 1868.

and were supported by the company.¹⁴

The first visiting star of any importance was Miss Julia Dean, who had by this time achieved an enviable reputation, particularly for her work in serious roles. Miss Dean was well received in The Hunchback, Lucretia Borgia, Ion, The Duke's Wager, and The Love Chase.¹⁵

Edward Eddy, with whom Mrs. Drew had appeared in Albany some years before, played an engagement in her theatre this season.¹⁶ The Inquirer made this announcement in connection with his appearance:

Ever on the lookout for novelty the management of the New Arch Street Theatre have effected an engagement with the renowned character actor, Mr. E. Eddy, who makes his first appearance this evening, in his renowned impersonation of "Jean Reamy," in the original drama entitled Jean Reamy, the Idiot of Normandy.

Before the end of his engagement, which also included offerings of The Police Spy, The Rag Picker of Paris, and The Life and Times of Richard III, he was joined by his wife, Miss Henrietta Irving.¹⁸

¹⁴ Ibid., September 1, 1867-June 20, 1868.

¹⁵ Ibid., September 9-21, 1867.

¹⁶ Eddy both acted in and managed theatres in Albany. Mrs. Drew acted with him in 1849.

¹⁷ The Inquirer, September 23, 1867.

¹⁸ Ibid., September 23-October 5, 1867. He was joined by Miss Irving on September 27.

Kate Reignolds and E. Falconer were the next players to appear with the stock company. They were seen in twelve performances of Innisfallen, and then appeared in Nobody's Daughter. Their run seems to have been extended because of their popularity.¹⁹

Under the Gaslight, a spectacle play written by Lewis Baker, was presented with the author in the leading role. A newspaper report called the scenic effects wonderful and noted that among them were to be seen a train of cars at full speed, a river pier, the interior of New York City Prison, and a brilliant ballroom scene. The production opened on January 27, and excited curiosity for four weeks. It was revived again at the end of the season for twenty performances. Comments were made in the Inquirer from time to time concerning the production effects, and the large and appreciative audiences that attended.²⁰ Apparently this production was a triumph for the scene painter and the machinist, and one feels that they should have received top billing for their efforts. What actor could compete with the background provided by this piece!

Miss Fanny B. Price, a young comedienne played a starring engagement in April. Her pieces were Leah, the

¹⁹ Ibid., October 7-November 2, 1867.

²⁰ Ibid., January 27-February 22, June 1-20, 1868.

Forsaken, and Tangled Threads, the latter a play written for her by Col. Fitzgerald. Tangled Threads was given a good production by the company.²¹

One aspiring young actress, Miss Amy Girdleston, made her debut at the Arch in The Child of the Regiment.²²

Several actors played return engagements this season. Edwin Adams appeared in his usual line of roles.²³ Lady Don, the English burlesque actress, whose title was genuine, came back again and acted in Kenilworth and Lalla Rookh.²⁴

The most exciting return engagement, however, was that of Lotta, who had, since her first engagement, become very successful and in demand as a performer. Her engagement lasted twelve days, and "the peerless Lotta," as she was billed, was seen in one of her most famous pieces, Little Nell and the Marchioness. The engagement brought large audiences to Mrs. Drew's theatre.²⁵

The stock company was important again this season at Mrs. Drew's theatre. They presented several new plays, some of which were by new authors. Almost without exception,

²¹ Ibid., April 27-May 9, 1868.

²² Ibid., May 11, 1868.

²³ Ibid., December 9-20, 1867.

²⁴ Ibid., January 13-26, 1868.

²⁵ Ibid., February 24-March 7, 1868.

these new pieces depended upon good technical presentation in order to be successful. Mrs. Drew, with her attention to detail in production and her liberality as a manager, was able to put them on the stage in good style. She turned some very poor plays into interesting production pieces. Doubtless, too, the good actors in the company helped to make some of these pieces seem better than they were. Such pieces as Surf, Under the Gaslight, and Light at Last, were dependent largely upon presentation skills rather than upon the inherent value of the script for their success. In all three plays, an interest in the author probably helped also to draw people to the theatre. Miss Olive Logan was a well-known actress turned playwright. Lewis Baker was an actor and theatre manager, and Fitzgerald, as has been mentioned, was a local editor. Not only was the manager assured of interest on the part of the public by producing the last-named writer's plays. She was doubtless able to strengthen her relations with the newspaper with which he was associated. Also, the production piqued the curiosity of the editors of rival newspapers and probably focused their attention upon her theatre.

Her splendid productions of plays by new writers may also have helped to arouse some interest in playwriting, and although no great dramas resulted from her encouragement, she did give new writers a chance to have their works presented.

Again this season she produced the burlesques written by Robert Craig, a member of her company.

There was a dearth of tragedy at Mrs. Drew's theatre this season. She may have felt that other theatres in the city were adequately fulfilling that need. As might be expected, since she was particularly interested in comedy, more plays of that kind were given this year. Some melodramas were offered, but little was offered in the way of variety entertainment. As for the star engagements, the appearances of Julia Dean and Letta were probably the most important, although other players were also apparently well received. From the evidence at hand, one judges this season to have been successful, also.

Mrs. John Drew chose Goldsmith's She Steeps to Conquer as the opening play of the 1868-69 season. Important roles were taken by Mrs. Drew, Hill, Craig, Mackay, Wallis, Hemple, Mrs. Thayer, and Mrs. Creese, all members of the company in the previous season.

The afterpiece, a travesty on Jenny Lind's phenomenal success, featured the most interesting new member of the company, Miss Fanny Davenport, in the role of Jenny Leatherlungs.²⁶ Hill was the stage manager this season,

²⁶ Fanny Davenport (1850-98) was the eldest of seven children of E. L. and Fanny Vining Davenport, all of whom went on the stage. She traveled with her parents as a child actress, and made her debut in adult roles while still quite young. Her first great success was in the role of Carline

and Murphy was again the business agent and treasurer. Miss Price, Everly, and James were also with the company, although they were not mentioned in the opening advertisement. There was one change in the price schedule for the season; the prices on secured seats in the orchestra were raised from seventy-five cents to one dollar.²⁷

The first night's performance elicited this commentary from the Inquirer:

. . . The house was crowded from parquette to dome, and hundreds remained standing during the whole performance. The fine old comedy She Stoops to Conquer, was admirably rendered throughout.

The afterpiece introduced Miss Fanny Davenport to the Philadelphia public in the character of "Jenny Leatherlungs." The lady made quite a hit in the character and was bouquettted extensively and deservedly. She is a blond and sings and acts charmingly. She made a most favorable impression on the audience and will become a favorite with the habitués of the Arch. . . . The company engaged for the present season at the Arch is a very strong one, and we hope that Mrs. Drew will give frequent opportunities for the enjoyment of good old English comedies.²⁸

The company did not appear again (without the aid

²⁶ (Continued) in a Louisville production of The Black Crook. She joined the Arch Street Theatre the following season as a soubrette. While at the Arch, she attracted the attention of Augustin Daly, who offered her a position with his company. Under his management, she became a popular actress, and when she next returned to Mrs. Drew's theatre, it was as a star.

²⁷ The Inquirer, September 12, 1868.

²⁸ Ibid., September 13, 1868.

of a star) except in afterpieces until late in the month. Then, as if in obedience to the Inquirer's request, Mrs. Drew began a round of comedies.²⁹ November brought more revivals by the company including a performance of a play that had not been seen in thirty years, Goldsmith's The Good Natured Man. Still more plays were revived in May and June.³⁰

Mrs. Drew revived two Shakespearian comedies during the season, the first one being Twelfth Night. On the opening night of this play, the Bulletin reported that it would be put on the stage with new costumes, scenery, and so on.³¹ The same newspaper welcomed the Arch's return to the superior dramatists after having produced such pieces as those by Brougham, Boucicault, Daly, and Fitzgerald. The writer said of the Arch productions:

There has been more lean than fat, but the financial results have been sufficiently satisfactory to compensate Mrs. Drew for the anguish that must of course fill her soul as she contemplates the degradation of popular taste.³²

²⁹ Ibid., September 28-October 3, 1868.

³⁰ Ibid., November 28-December 4, 1868 and May 17-19, June 16-18, 1869.

³¹ The Evening Bulletin, January 25, 1869, hereafter cited as The Bulletin.

³² Ibid., January 23, 1869.

Of the production of Twelfth Night, the same commentator wrote:

Perhaps the performance of this great drama at Arch last evening derived additional zest from the inevitable comparison with the wretched dramatic journey-work which has preceded it, but it is quite true that the entertainment was very excellent, fully equal, we think to anything ever offered to the public in this admirable theatre. Mrs. Drew appeared as "Viola," and her personation of the maid who loves the man whose unwilling messenger of love to another she is, was characterized by all the grace and sweetness of which the part is capable. It requires a true artist to give full expression to the emotions that belong to this fascinating character. Mrs. Drew proved herself, even more than we had anticipated, capable, evolving the very essence of the conception. Miss Davenport deserves to be eulogized next for her performance of "Maria," the witty, mischievous, good-natured woman, whose overflowing spirits form a fine contrast to "Olivia's" serene propriety. We hope in the future Mrs. Drew will give this young lady larger opportunity than she has had in the past. . . .

The play is magnificently mounted. The scenery is new and fine. The scene by Hawthorne, representing the sea-coast of Illyria, is particularly worthy of praise. The costumes are new, beautiful, and appropriate. . . .³³

The same newspaper reported that the Arch on the first two nights was "crowded to suffocation." The play remained on the boards through February 6, and was given another production on April 2.³⁴

March 8 brought Much Ado About Nothing with Mrs. Drew as Beatrice, Hill as Benedict. The Bulletin reviewer had some interesting comments on this production:

³³ Ibid., January 26, 1869.

³⁴ Ibid., February 6, April 2, 1869.

Mrs. Drew played "Beatrice" last evening, and played it well, as she has done many a time before. It is fair to say that it is her best personation; and this is warm praise, in view of her excellent interpretation of numerous other characters. Probably there are actresses on the stage who can present the part more acceptably, but it has never been our good fortune to see them. While there is nothing essentially original or novel in Mrs. Drew's characterization--and it would require genius to create any original novelty in the part--it is remarkable for a certain delicacy and grace which contrasts favorably with the boisterousness in which many other performers seem to think it necessary to indulge whenever they attempt the part. Mrs. Drew has sufficient vivacity and spirit, without any of the customary coarseness.

Apparently Mrs. Drew had overcome her own early tendency to be too boisterous in some roles. The same reviewer praised Hill's acting of Benedict, and commented at some length upon the mounting of the production:

The play is magnificently mounted. The first scene--representing a terrace looking out upon the bay is very beautiful. The ball room scene and the street scene are remarkable for a certain uniqueness of effect; and the cathedral scene is also worthy of praise for its grandeur. The costumes are rich and elegant, and so contrasted in color and material as to produce a very fine effect. They have additional merit of being in a strict accord with the fashions of the time. Even the supes laid aside their accustomed nondescript toggery, and appeared in correct and elegant dresses.

On the whole we can safely say that the play has never been brought out in a more superb manner in this city, and that it has not been acted throughout more acceptably for many years.³⁵

The Inquirer praised the "style" with which the play was placed upon the stage, and said that it was admirably cast. This newspaper also noted that the Arch was "crowded

³⁵ Ibid., March 9, 1869.

every night with the elite of Philadelphia" and called the revival "a grand success."³⁶ The play was given thirteen performances during the season, the last one being on March 25.³⁷

Several new plays were given, and according to the Bulletin, they were not of much account. The first of these was called He's Got Money and was written by Fred Maeder (son of Clara Fisher Maeder) and T. B. McDonough. It ran a week in November.³⁸ The second new play was H. J. Byron's The Lancashire Lass, which is of some interest because of the controversy that arose over the right to produce it in Philadelphia. Mrs. Drew, seemingly aware that the play was about to be produced also by the rival Chestnut Street Theatre, ran a special advertisement on October 29, stating that she had purchased from Lester Wallack "the sole right to present in this city H. J. Byron's successful Drama, called the 'Lancashire Lass.'"³⁹ Two days later, William E. Sinn of the Chestnut, announced through the medium of advertising that he had acquired a copy of the play direct from London

³⁶ The Inquirer, March 9, 1869.

³⁷ The Bulletin, March 8-18, 22, 23, 25, 1869.

³⁸ Ibid., November 2-7, 1868.

³⁹ Ibid., October 29, 1868. Mrs. Drew started running a notice of the coming production in her advertisements beginning November 2.

through the author's agent, and that his theatre would produce the play on November 9, the same day that Mrs. Drew had designated as her opening.⁴⁰ The two productions did appear on the same evening and interest must have been divided between the two theatres. The Arch production remained on the boards one week longer than that of the Chestnut.⁴¹

The following month Mrs. Drew produced "in truly splendid style" another spectacular piece by Col. Fitzgerald. This one was called Wolves at Bay, and staff members responsible for the scenic effects were mentioned in the advertisements for the production, and rightly so, for they were the real stars of the piece.⁴²

Augustin Daly's A Flash of Lightning was the Christmas season presentation. It, too, was given an elaborate production. This sensational piece ran five weeks,⁴³ and one writer satirically remarked on the third week: "A flash of lightning continues to electrify Arch patrons."⁴⁴

Edmund Yates' Tame Cats came next and held the stage

⁴⁰ Ibid., October 31, 1868.

⁴¹ Ibid., November 9-27, 1868. The play closed at the Chestnut, November 21, at the Arch, November 27.

⁴² Ibid., December 7-18, 1868.

⁴³ Ibid., December 23, 1868-January 23, 1869.

⁴⁴ Ibid., January 5, 1869.

for two weeks. Several days after the play opened, the

Inquirer commented:

Tame Cats, the new comedy of Edmund Yates has most successfully run the gauntlet of popular opinion at the Arch Street Theatre. The play crowds the theatre nightly, and it could not be better placed upon the stage, or acted in a more superior manner. Mrs. John Drew deserves special mention for her capital impersonation of Mrs. Harry Langley, and but little fault can be found with any of the characters.⁴⁵

Later in the run of the play, the same newspaper mentioned the audience response and the production of the play:

The piece thus far, has been one of the most successful hits of the season. It has been witnessed nightly by crowded and delighted audiences, and it is produced in a manner worthy even of the enviable reputation the Arch bears for the excellent manner in which the management places everything on the stage.⁴⁶

A. M. Young's play, a translation of an unidentified French comedy, was the next new production. It was called A Victim of Circumstance.⁴⁷ The Bulletin called it a "little French comedy of the best class" and praised the acting of the play, particularly that of Mrs. Drew, who acted the role of a mysterious, incomprehensible woman, who did and said unaccountable things. This same paper made special note of the laughter evoked by the piece. Sharing the program with this play was John Brougham's Pocahontas with Miss Davenport in the title role.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ The Inquirer, February 11, 1869.

⁴⁶ Ibid., February 15, 1869. The play ran February 8-18.

⁴⁷ The Bulletin, February 22-March 7, 1869.

⁴⁸ Ibid., February 23, 1869.

Another new play by a Philadelphia writer was brought out. The author was identified only as "a Philadelphia lawyer." It was called Women Rule, and the Inquirer said of the new offering:

Women Rule, an indigenous production, accredited to a lawyer of our city, has been placed upon the boards of the Arch, with what result, in a pecuniary sense, remains to be seen. No pains has been spared to give The Women a good start. The cast is well apportioned, and the members of the company make the most of the matter. The habitués of the Arch are inclined to take a good trial of anything placed before them, relying upon the reputation of the establishment to furnish them with sterling dramatic feasts.⁴⁹

The Bulletin praised the acting but said that the play and the characters were weak dramatically and that the plot was involved and obscure.⁵⁰ This seems to have been the least successful of any of the new productions, and the play was withdrawn after three days, the remainder of the week being given over to revivals and benefit performances.⁵¹

Tom Robertson's School was seen for two weeks in April. One newspaper did not think that it was as good a play as his earlier Caste, but had the following to say about the characters, Mrs. Drew's acting, and the mounting:

The characters in School are all interesting and a few of them possess individuality. "Naomie Tighe" is the heiress, and the leader of the school. She is lively,

⁴⁹ The Inquirer, March 31, 1869. The play ran March 29-31.

⁵⁰ The Bulletin, March 30, 1869.

⁵¹ Ibid., April 1-3, 1869.

audacious and sentimental, after the fashion of the school girls, and a good warm friend. Mrs. Drew, whose versatility is equal to anything from "Lady Macbeth" to "Mrs. Toodles," played the character with exquisite grace and spirit; and, indeed this may be said of the whole company. We have none but words of commendation to bestow. . . . There is absolutely no fault to find with any of the personations of any of the performers.

The scenery is new, and very beautiful. The forest scene, and the garden of the school, deserve separate mention. The imitation of pouring rain and biting blasts was so natural that an old lady in the parquet circle was observed to grow nervous and assume her gum shoes and waterproof.⁵²

If this comment is true, the theatre technicians must have been well pleased with the response to their efforts to create sensational effects. It is a response that would have delighted Belasco or any of the other exponents of realism.

Wilkie Collins and Charles Fechter's drama, Black and White was given its first American performance at the Arch.⁵³ The Inquirer said of it: "The play is remarkably well produced and is capitally acted, as all pieces are of the excellent company engaged by Mrs. Drew."⁵⁴

Only three stars made appearances at the New Arch Street Theatre this season, and they were players who had had previous engagements there. They were Caroline Richings

⁵² Ibid., April 6, 1869.

⁵³ The Inquirer, June 7-15, 1869.

⁵⁴ Ibid., June 11, 1869.

and her opera company, Lotta, and John Collins, the Irish comedian.⁵⁵

Probably the most interesting benefit performance of the season was the one given for Miss Fanny Davenport. Her father, E. L. Davenport, who was starring at the Walnut Street Theatre, came over to the Arch to play Rover in Wild Oats on this occasion.⁵⁶ With Mrs. Drew's permission, Miss Davenport reciprocated the favor and was seen at her father's benefit at the other theatre, in the role of Lady Gay Spanker in London Assurance.⁵⁷

After the theatre closed for the regular season, it was leased by John A. Ellsler, who presented G. L. Fox and his Humpty-Dumpty pantomime during the summer intercession.⁵⁸

The eighth season of Mrs. Drew's management was likewise a success, if we are to judge by the quality of the productions, the reports of audience response, and the words of the actress-manager herself, who said that fortune favored her for about eight years.⁵⁹ Again this season Mrs.

⁵⁵ Ibid., (Richings) September 14-26, 1868, (Lotta) October 5-31, 1868 and April 19-May 15, 1869, (Collins) May 24-June 4, 1869.

⁵⁶ Ibid., March 24, 1869.

⁵⁷ Ibid., May 27, 1869.

⁵⁸ Ibid., June 21-July 17, 1869.

⁵⁹ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 117.

Drew had an excellent acting company, for many of the people who had been in the company previous seasons were again with her organization. By playing together a number of years, the individual members undoubtedly learned how to play together as a group and achieve something of an ensemble, a quality which must have characterized the best stock companies, and a quality not possible generally under the star system. Mrs. Drew was again praised for the particular attention which she paid to mounting her productions.

The actress-manager revived more old comedies, including two by Shakespeare, during the season. This no doubt pleased many of the older theatregoers, who were happy to see her in revivals of old favorites, and it may also have been of interest to the younger generation, which was curious to see the plays which their parents had enjoyed.

Through an arrangement with Wallack, Mrs. Drew brought several new plays to Philadelphia, and she also produced some new plays by local writers. The emphasis at her house this season was on comedies, particularly old ones, as far as theatrical fare was concerned, although some new works in comedy and melodrama were seen. Variety was added to the legitimate fare by bringing in visiting attractions.

A pre-season engagement featuring Lydia Thompson's

Burlesque Company delayed the opening of the regular 1869-70 dramatic season at Mrs. Drew's theatre by several weeks. Bulver-Lytton's Money was the play selected for the opening night, September 25. Several new names were noted in the company, including J. F. Cathcart, who apparently replaced Barton Hill after the latter left the company to fulfill an engagement as leading comedian at Mrs. John Wood's theatre in London. Mrs. Clara Fisher Maeder joined the company this season, and Miss Annie Firman, J. Mathews, and M. Snyder were new names in the cast list. Old players to return included Miss Price, Mackay, James, and Everly.⁶⁰

Again this season the stock company provided most of the entertainment, and if Stull were still with the company, he could have again complained of being "heartsick and memory-sore." In addition to revivals of a number of Mrs. Drew's favorite old comedies, the actress manager brought out a Shakespearean play that has been produced infrequently. It was All's Well that Ends Well,⁶¹ and Mrs. Drew was seen in the role of Helena. The scenery and costumes were said to have been excellent and the acting was commended.⁶²

Among the revivals was a production of Tom Taylor's scenic comedy, which had originally been brought out at the

⁶⁰ The Inquirer, September 25, 1869.

⁶¹ Ibid., October 25-29, 1869.

⁶² Ibid., October 29, 1869.

Haymarket Theatre in London in 1860 under the title of The Overland Mail. The production at Mrs. Drew's theatre was called The Overland Route. It depended upon spectacular effects for its appeal, and amazed people for two weeks.⁶³

Boucicault's Formosa, or the Railroad to Ruin received a very bad notice from the Inquirer reviewer, and Mrs. Drew was criticized severely for producing it and for appearing in the leading role of a woman of unenviable character. Instead of discouraging people from seeing the play, the review possibly had the opposite effect for it ran three weeks.⁶⁴

The next new play was Robertson's Progress, which was an adaptation of Victorien Sardou's Les Ganaches.⁶⁵ The actress-manager did not appear in this one.

On November 1, Mrs. Drew brought out the first American production of Boucicault and Byron's Lost at Sea. New scenery, fine effects, including a spectacular fire scene, and original music were advertised. Again audiences seemed eager to see the sensational type of production, for this piece, too, had a long run. Mrs. Drew was seen in the role of Laura Franklin.⁶⁶

⁶³ Ibid., December 6-17, 1869.

⁶⁴ Ibid., September 27-October 16, 1869. The review cited appeared September 28.

⁶⁵ Ibid., October 18-21, 1869.

⁶⁶ Ibid., November 1-25, 1869.

Several dramas based upon Dickens' novels were presented also by the regular company during the season. Little Dorrit was seen during the Christmas holiday season, and Mrs. E. D. Wallace, who made the dramatization, appeared with the company. Mrs. Drew was Mrs. Clennam, and the visiting actress-writer acted the title role.⁶⁷ The second character from the English novelist's pen to be featured at the Arch was Little Emily in David Copperfield, or Little Em'ly as she was called in the dramatization,⁶⁸ John Brougham, during a starring engagement, was seen in Dombey and Son and David Copperfield.⁶⁹

Augustin Daly's adaptation of Frou Frou was given a fine technical production, and Mrs. Drew appeared in the famous acting role of Gilberte.⁷⁰

Only three visiting stars made appearances this season, the remainder of the time being filled by company productions. In addition to Brougham,⁷¹ Lotta entertained audiences several weeks.⁷² Joseph K. Emmet, a young character actor made an appearance and was able to delight audiences

⁶⁷ Ibid., December 24-31, 1869.

⁶⁸ Ibid., January 10-22, February 14-19, 1870.

⁶⁹ Ibid., January 24-February 12, May 30-June 4, 1870.

⁷⁰ Ibid., April 4-15, 1870.

⁷¹ See 69 above.

⁷² The Inquirer, March 7-April 2, 1870.

with a piece called Fritz, Our German Cousin. He sang, danced, and played instrumental numbers in this production.⁷³

During a round of benefit performances, a player named B. L. Matlack made an appearance in Hamlet. In making the announcement, the Inquirer stated: "A gentleman of whom we know nothing, will play Hamlet at Mrs. John Drew's theatre supported by the whole company." Apparently he did not distinguish himself, for he did not appear again.⁷⁴

June 4 was the last night of the dramatic season. Two days later, the summer season opened with Dan Bryant's minstrels. They were followed by a troupe of entertainers managed by Josh Hart. It is not known whether Mrs. Drew booked these entertainers into her theatre, or whether she merely rented the house to them. The latter seems more likely, at least as far as the last-named is concerned.⁷⁵

Again this season the regular company furnished most of the entertainment presented at the Arch Street Theatre. There were frequent revivals of comedies, and Mrs. Drew brought out a number of new pieces. Indeed, the season followed much the same pattern as the previous one, although the productions as a whole seem not to have been as interesting this season.

⁷³ Ibid., May 2-21, 1870.

⁷⁴ Ibid., February 28, 1870.

⁷⁵ Ibid., June 6-July 1, 1870.

September 10 was the opening date for the 1870-71 season, and the two plays presented were She Stoops to Conquer and The Swiss Swains. New members in the company this season included Miss Emilie Kiehl, Miss May Saville, and C. McManus. The following-named players from other seasons were also in the company: Miss Price, Hill, Mackay, Wallis, Craig, Hemple, James, Mrs. Thayer, and Mrs. Maeder. Joseph D. Murphy was still the business manager, and Barton Hill, who rejoined the company, was stage manager. Mark Hassler was the musical director. The theatre was again called Mrs. Drew's Arch Street Theatre, the word "new" being dropped from the name for the first time since the house was rebuilt in 1863.⁷⁶

Again this season, much time was given to the revival of old comedies, and The Comedy of Errors, As You Like It, The Merchant of Venice, and Much Ado About Nothing, were added to the list of company productions. There were also revivals of more recent plays such as Ours and Rosedale.⁷⁷

Several new pieces were seen again this season, the first of them being Augustin Daly's adaptation of Victorien Sardou's Fernande. One reviewer called this "the best modern French play produced in this city for many years." He also

⁷⁶ Ibid., September 10, 1870.

⁷⁷ Ibid., September 10-October 31, December 1-30, 1870, January 1-June 17, 1871, and the Bulletin, September 10-November 30, 1870.

had high praise for Mrs. Drew's acting:

Mrs. Drew as the "Countess Clothilde" represented the revengeful one who was discarded. Her playing throughout was superb. We have never seen this fine actress perform with more sensibility, intelligence and subtle power in her part. The opportunity, of course, is unusually good, for the actress has presented the whole range of emotions from the kindest benevolence to the wildest vindictiveness and fiercest rage. But we are sure Mrs. Drew improved the opportunity as few other women upon the American stage could have done. We can give her most generous praise for her splendid effort without unduly exalting it.⁷⁸

The Inquirer reported that the Arch had been filled with a "first class audience to witness the production of the great Parisian play of Fernande, with its beautiful scenery, effective tableau and great cast."⁷⁹ This report on the audience at the Arch was in sharp contrast to a report of the audience that gathered at the Walnut to see Edwin Forrest's performance of King Lear. According to the report, the audience "held their breaths" when Forrest was on the stage, and laughed and talked freely and disrespectfully when he was off the stage.⁸⁰ At the Walnut, the people went to see the star, at the Arch, they went to see the production.

The first production in Philadelphia of Lester Wallack's local comedy of Central Park, or the House with Two Doors

⁷⁸ The Bulletin, September 13, 1870.

⁷⁹ The Inquirer, September 13, 1870.

⁸⁰ The Bulletin, September 13, 1870.

was the next offering. Mrs. Drew appeared with the company and was seen in the role of Mrs. Kerr Flamberry.⁸¹

Barton Hill's dramatization of Wilkie Collins' novel, Man and Wife was the next new presentation. Mrs. Drew was not in the cast, the leading roles being taken by Miss Price and Hill. The Inquirer praised the dramatization and also the production.⁸²

Mrs. Drew's theatre was the first Philadelphia house to present another of Tom Robertson's plays. In this case, it was a dubious honor to be able to do so, for the play, M. P., seems to have been a very poor one. The Bulletin said that it was an unsuccessful attempt by the author to "work in the vein from which Ours and Caste were produced." The reviewer from this newspaper was of the opinion that whatever entertainment was derived from the play was the result of the company's effort to make it interesting. He said that the players "all struggled nobly and earnestly in this almost hopeless cause, and they were rewarded with the deep sympathy of the audience."⁸³

James Alberly (or Albury) was the author of the next play, The Two Roses. This, too, seems to have been a poor

⁸¹ The Inquirer, September 26-October 8, 1870.

⁸² Ibid., October 10-19, 1870.

⁸³ The Bulletin, October 24-29, 1870. The review cited appeared October 25.

play, but the staging was again praised. It was withdrawn after three performances.⁸⁴ It was another play that Mrs. Drew had acquired from Wallack.

The next new production met with greater success. It was Robert Craig and Barton Hill's dramatization of Dickens' unfinished novel, Edwin Drood. The dramatization was praised by the Bulletin reviewer as well as the acting and the production of the piece. Mrs. Drew was not in the cast, and the adapters of the piece were named in the advertisement.⁸⁵

Mrs. Drew produced a second play by Alberry during the season. This one was called Coquettes, or the Two Joneses, and had a longer run than the first play by the same author. Mrs. Drew was Mrs. Arthur Minton. The Inquirer said that she was fascinating in the role. The play was handsomely mounted, and the script was thought to be "a little better than the general run" on the stage of that day.⁸⁶

The company, including the actress-manager, appeared in one performance of a play called A Morning Call. Presumably this was a new play. Mrs. Drew's role was not named

⁸⁴ Ibid., October 31-November 3, 1870.

⁸⁵ Ibid., November 14-19, 1870. The review cited above appeared November 15.

⁸⁶ The Inquirer, January 9-14, 25, 1871. The review cited appeared January 10.

in the advertisement.⁸⁷

Perhaps Mrs. Drew felt that the response to the stock company productions was not as great as she wished this season, for she brought in many stars. The first of these was Oliver Doud Byron, who appeared in McCloskey's sensational drama Across the Continent. Mrs. Drew's company gave it a spectacular production, and the piece was popular with Arch Street audiences for a number of years.⁸⁸

Lydia Thompson's burlesque company appeared for three weeks in January, and were seen in such pieces as Paris, Larline, and The Brigands.⁸⁹ During this engagement, Mrs. Drew's theatre gave a special matinee performance to aid the French who suffered as a result of Franco-German difficulties. The Inquirer commented upon Mrs. Drew's charitable activities at this time:

During the present week Mrs. Drew with commendable generosity, purposes giving an afternoon performance in aid of the fund for the relief of the French sufferers. The day has not yet been fixed, but probably will be announced in our columns tomorrow. Mrs. Drew does not, as is so often the case, intend taking the credit for liberality without cost to herself, but will devote the entire proceeds of the entertainment to the object on behalf of which it is offered. We do not doubt that the public will cordially cooperate so as to make the occasion a credit to the city.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ The Bulletin, November 5, 1870.

⁸⁸ The Inquirer, December 5-24, 1870.

⁸⁹ Ibid., January 30-February 18, 1871.

⁹⁰ Ibid., February 13, 1871.

On February 15, the Inquirer announced that the benefit would be held on Saturday afternoon and reported: "To the honor of the company it must be stated that, catching the generous spirit of the manageress, the members have all offered their services." The same newspaper on February 22 reported that \$704 was realized from the matinee and turned over to the fund.

Stuart Robson, former low comedian with the company, came back for a starring engagement, appearing in a burlesque called Black Eyed Se-u-san. It was reported that the engagement was fulfilled satisfactorily as far as both his manager and his public were concerned.⁹¹

Lotta returned again and played forty-one performances of such pieces as The Little Detective, Fire Fly, Little Nell, Heartsease, and Uncle Tom's Cabin.⁹² Theatre-goers in Philadelphia were charmed with Lotta's offerings, even though the press of that city was not much impressed. Mrs. Drew did not share their opinion, however, for she remarked later: "The great little actress Lotta acted with me for several years--long engagements, which were never enough for the public's satisfaction or my own."⁹³

⁹¹ Ibid., February 20-25, 1871. The review cited appeared February 24.

⁹² Ibid., February 27-April 7, 1871.

⁹³ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 114.

A player named Rufus Adams made two appearances at the Arch Street Theatre. On December 2, he appeared as Shylock in The Merchant of Venice, and Mrs. Drew was Portia. For his second appearance, he was Peter Teazle, and Mrs. Drew was, of course, Lady Teazle.⁹⁴ From the two roles, one would judge that he was not a young actor making a bid for theatrical success.

John Brougham played a two-weeks' engagement in May,⁹⁵ and Miss Kate Reignolds appeared for one week.⁹⁶ Caroline Richings (now Bernard) made one appearance during the season, though not as a star. She appeared on Hill's benefit night as a volunteer.⁹⁷

At a testimonial benefit matinee given for Mrs. Caroline Richings Bernard at the Academy of Music on June 3, Mrs. Drew and her company presented The Comedy of Errors. In the evening they closed the stock company's dramatic season at the Arch with A Victim of Circumstance.⁹⁸ The last two weeks of the season were filled by Lina Edwin and her comedy company in the play, Rank.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ The Inquirer, December 2, 1870 and January 27, 1871.

⁹⁵ Ibid., May 1-13, 1871.

⁹⁶ Ibid., May 15-27, 1871.

⁹⁷ Ibid., May 29, 1871.

⁹⁸ Ibid., June 3, 1871.

⁹⁹ Ibid., June 5-17, 1871.

Mrs. Drew's policy this season was much the same as it had been for the previous one. That is, she presented many favorite old comedies and brought out some new pieces that had never been seen in Philadelphia before. Again she was praised for her production of the old comedies, but the new plays were not completely successful this season despite Mrs. Drew's efforts to bring them out in good style.

The actress-manager still had the competition offered by the Walnut, which was by this time presenting novelty entertainers as well as actors and was no longer strictly a legitimate theatre either. These two, the Walnut and the Arch, had to meet the competition this season of the Chestnut Street Theatre, which had been taken over by E. L. Davenport and was operated as a legitimate house featuring a good resident stock company. Davenport brought out many old favorites in both comedy and tragedy and received good notices in the press. Then, too, by this time there were several variety houses in Philadelphia, which furnished entertainment of a different sort, but also competed for audiences.

Since Mrs. Drew's house concentrated on comedies, her companies were selected for their ability in that line of acting. Each season fewer and fewer tragedies were presented. During the past two seasons, no tragic actors had been booked as stars. Therefore, if people wished to see the classic tragedies, they had to go to one of the two houses

that presented them. When regular Arch patrons started going to rival houses to see another kind of production, it is entirely possible that Mrs. Drew's theatre lost regular patrons and the other theatre gained them. The Walnut, because it was bringing name stars to its boards, continued to appeal to many people who wanted to see Forrest and Beeth, for example. The Chestnut, by virtue of the fact that it had just reopened under the direction of an actor, who by this time had a great deal of prestige, likewise attracted attention.

Many of Mrs. Drew's old patrons came back season after season to see her productions of old comedies. These were the people whom the reviewers described as "intelligent audiences" and "the elite of Philadelphia." Their patronage doubtless could not and did not completely support the theatre. Many of the same people undoubtedly came to see some of the new plays, for people enjoyed seeing new dramas that were hits in the theatrical capitals. Theatre going at the Arch was undoubtedly a habit for many people. James G. Huneker once said that it was for him.¹⁰⁰ The new

¹⁰⁰ The Bulletin, July 10, 1936, "Men and Things," carried a story of the Arch Street Theatre, in which the following was reported: "'Jim' Huneker wrote that his chief dissipation was the Arch Street Theatre and said the stock company there always seemed to him to rank in completeness with any other he knew. Among the other players he saw there--and, of course, he remembered particularly, as all did who saw it, Mrs. Drew's memorable appearances as Mrs. Malaprop. . . -- he listed Adam Everly, Edwin Adams, John Brougham, and F. F. Mackay." Mackay left the company the following season, and if Huneker saw him at the Arch as a stock player, he must have seen him before that time.

melodramas, particularly the spectacular ones, and the novelty entertainments attracted a different clientele. Philadelphia was a growing city and doubtless many of the people cared little about the Arch's productions of old comedies, which by this time had become a tradition. Instead, they were interested in spectacular effects, thrills, and excitement in their theatre-fare, or in musical entertainment. Mrs. Drew doubtless felt that it was necessary to cater to a variety of tastes in order to keep her house filled. Theatrical management is, of course, a business and in order to succeed, a successful manager must keep his house full. This, Mrs. Drew attempted to do, and she must have been reasonably successful, and the stockholders must have been satisfied with her efforts. At any rate, she retained the lease at the Arch Street Theatre year in and year out.

A new development this season was the admission of combinations during the regular season. The Lydia Thompson and Lina Edwards troupes, were, except for Caroline Richings Bernard's English Opera Company, the first groups that Mrs. Drew admitted to her theatre that were entertainment units complete in themselves which did not need the support of a stock company. The traveling combinations were eventually to take over the theatrical entertainment field and supplant the stock companies.

The 1871-72 season opened on September 16 with three plays, A Bold Stroke for a Husband, Your Life's in Danger, and

The Spectre Bridegroom. By using three plays, Mrs. Drew gave her patrons an opportunity to see many of the new additions to her company and most of the old favorites.¹⁰¹ A pre-season announcement stated that Mrs. Drew had been hard at work reorganizing her company "from which several old favorites have seceded." The writer expressed the belief, however, that the new company would be as acceptable as ever.¹⁰²

Mackay and Craig were among the missing, the former having gone to Boston, and the latter to Davenport's Chestnut Street Theatre.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ The Inquirer, September 16, 1871.

¹⁰² Ibid., August 21, 1871.

¹⁰³ The Inquirer seems to have been of the opinion that Craig did not better his position by "seceding" from Mrs. Drew's house to go to a rival theatre, if we are to judge by subsequent reviews. Craig received poor notices in his new position. On September 16, his work in high comedy was disparaged and the reviewer said that Craig was not an actor at all, but a "burlesque player and a mimic." Perhaps his long success at the Arch had been due to the fact that Mrs. Drew usually featured him in the sort of part he did best. His burlesques and imitations were very well received in her house. In December, Craig left Davenport's theatre, and an announcement in the Inquirer for December 25 stated that he and W. H. Smith planned to open the Seventh Street Opera House. Apparently nothing came of this venture, for no further notices were found. A playbill dated January 4, 1873, indicates that a benefit was given for the widow and orphans of the late Robert Craig at the Academy of Music on that date. Mrs. Drew, members of her company, and Davenport appeared at the benefit. American Playbills, I, Rare Book Collection, University of Pennsylvania Library.

Mrs. Drew seems to have wanted to give the children of other members of the profession an opportunity to appear this season, for among the company members were Miss Mollie Maeder, daughter of Clara Fisher Maeder, W. H. Wallis, Jr., son of the senior Wallis, who had long been with the company, and Charles Jefferson, son of Joseph Jefferson, the famous comedian. During the season, Miss Anna Lanagan, a relative of one of the new members of the company, made her debut.¹⁰⁴ Other new players this season were Claude Burroughs, Neil Gray, Josephine Laurens, and Edmund S. Coles. Among the old favorites still with the company were: Mrs. Thayer, Mrs. Maeder, Miss Price, Everly, Hemple, Wallis, Mrs. Greese, and Hill.¹⁰⁵

On the opening day of the season, the Inquirer said of the lady manager of the Arch:

It seems scarcely necessary to make any promise on behalf of Mrs. Drew. For eleven years this accomplished artiste has controlled the fortunes of her house not only to her own great reward, but also to the instruction, entertainment and amusement of the public. In all that relates to the perfect production of plays, her management has been lavish of expense, judgment and taste. During all the long period of her direction, the company of the Arch Street Theatre have been among the very foremost in the country; the appointments of the stage, whether of dress, scenery or furniture, have been

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., December 12, 1871, noted her appearance with the Florences' and said that her acting was too artificial.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., September 16, 1871.

both costlly and elegant, while the front of the house has been clean, beautiful and comfortable. During the summer recess, we have been informed the whole theatre has been very handsomely refitted, and made more than usually cosy and attractive.¹⁰⁶

After the first performance, the same newspaper commented that not only was every seat occupied long before curtain time, but every inch of standing room was also filled "by an intelligent and appreciative audience." The reviewer also said:

The star of the evening was Mrs. John Drew herself, who as manager, received the hearty greetings of her thousands of friends, and who, as "Donna Olivia," gave them new cause for their admiration and respect. Actresses may come and go, but Mrs. Drew continues to be the most cultured and elegant comedy actress on the stage. Her performance on Saturday evening was altogether satisfying, and gave ample assurance that the lovers of old comedies will be certain for years to come to see their heroine admirably portrayed by Mrs. Drew in her own beautiful theatre.

The same article gave Miss Laurens and Jefferson high praise and found the other players "valuable additions" to the company, although it suggested that Lanagan and Gray played "acceptably and nothing more, and indifferently well." The reviewer also noted that the theatre had been "completely refitted, painted, gilded and papered" and said that it was "elegant and comfortable to the extreme."¹⁰⁷

More stars were booked for the season so the company

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., September 16, 1871.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., September 18, 1871.

appeared in fewer productions by themselves. Accordingly, there were fewer revivals of old plays this season, although there were some and also some revivals of plays of a more recent date.

The first new piece to be performed by the company was H. J. Byron's Wait and Hope. The Inquirer stated that it was built "upon the time-honored melodramatic principle" and was "neither better nor worse than such pieces generally are." He praised the mounting as "another instance of the taste and liberality for which the management of this theatre have so long been famous."¹⁰⁸ Mrs. Drew was in the cast of this play and also in Rob Roy, which was added to the program for the Saturday night performance.¹⁰⁹

The Bells, or the Murder of a Polish Jew, based upon M. M. Erckmann-Chatrian's novel, The Polish Jew, was another new production. This piece was said to be playing simultaneously in London with marked success, and a review of the Arch production stated that it was "capitally put upon the stage and well received" at Mrs. Drew's theatre.¹¹⁰ Later the Inquirer noted that it was put on each week with

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., January 1, 1872.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., December 31, 1871-January 6, 1872.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., February 27, 1872.

moderately good houses but not as good as the piece deserved.¹¹¹

Working Men of Philadelphia, according to the Inquirer, a play which Laura Keane, New York actress-manager, claimed to have written, was a moral play on drinking. It played to indifferent houses for eleven performances. Mrs. Drew appeared in the role of Martha Savage, a drunken working man's wife.¹¹²

Other new productions seem to have additional players other than the regular company members added to the casts. The first of these was J. J. McCloskey's Pomp, or Way Down South. The piece had a panorama, which included views of the Mississippi River and a plantation. J. C. Campbell joined the company and played Pomp.¹¹³ This scenic piece was well attended at the beginning of the run, but audiences thinned after it had been playing for a time.

Bartley Campbell, who specialized in the writing of sensational pieces, was the author of Through the Fire. Miss Phillis [sic] Glover, who had been playing at the Chestnut, moved over to the Arch for this one production. The Inquirer said that the piece was "worth seeing if only as one of the most curious and frequently aimless hodgepodes of

¹¹¹ Ibid., February 26-March 1, 1872. The review cited appeared on March 1.

¹¹² Ibid., April 15-25, 1872.

¹¹³ Ibid., November 20-December 2, 1871.

familiar sensational materials ever put upon the stage."

Moderately good audiences were reported on March 29, and the author was given a benefit on April 5, a poem and a farce being added to the program at that time.¹¹⁴

Miss Kate Denin and W. B. Laurens were added to the company for the production of F. G. Maeder's Buffalo Bill, King of the Bordermen. The public seemed to approve of this production, particularly the persons who frequented the galleries. The Inquirer described this piece as being one "to surpass all previous blood-and -thunder pieces," and said that if "such thrilling incidents as murders, abductions, fights with Indians and bushwhackers, duels with bowie knives, blowing up of forts, and prairie fires" are required to make a good production, "then is Buffalo Bill great indeed." This description sounds as if Maeder's piece had much in common with the twentieth century western motion picture. The Inquirer reviewer said that the dialogue and the construction of the play were "wretched in the extreme." He praised some of the settings, but said that others were "shabby and inappropriate" which is the first disparaging remark about the mounting of a production at the Arch Street Theatre that this writer has found.¹¹⁵ At the

¹¹⁴ Ibid., March 25-April 6, 1872. The review cited appeared March 27.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., May 14, 1872.

beginning of the second week, the same newspaper announced that "the wretched medley of melo-dramatic materials entitled Buffalo Bill" which had "nightly crowded the theatre," would continue.¹¹⁶ An advertisement on May 22 stated that 12,000 people had seen it, a statement which must, of course, be discounted since it probably was only a matter of advertising strategy. Mrs. Drew allowed Mrs. Maeder's son, the author of the piece, an author's night before the play closed.¹¹⁷

In addition to "visiting players," who were not billed as stars, some regular stars did make appearances this season. Charles Mathews was the first.¹¹⁸ This veteran actor was seen in a number of pieces such as: Married for Money, Cool as a Cucumber, The Critic, and Used Up. He appeared in two or three pieces a night during his two-weeks engagement. The Inquirer termed the engagement "brilliant"

¹¹⁶ Ibid., May 20, 1872.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., May 13-25, 1872. On his benefit night, East Lynne, and Nick of the Woods were the plays and the Irma Glee Club sang.

¹¹⁸ Charles Mathews (1803-1878) was a well-known English light comedian. His first American engagement was not a success, for he was accused of being anti-American. This second engagement, however, was successful. Mathews, formerly married to Mme. Vestris, English actress-manager, was married to Mrs. Lizzie Weston Davenport, an American actress. He was a writer of farces as well as an actor. He appeared at Philadelphia while on a world tour.

and said that Mathews was recalled three times on his final night.¹¹⁹ In the spring, he returned for another two weeks, and apparently this engagement also was successful.¹²⁰

Another star new to the Arch Street Theatre was Charles Fechter.¹²¹ He played in "almost crowded houses" in Hamlet, The Lady of Lyons, Ruy Blas, and Don Caesar de Bazan. Miss Price, who later married the star, was his chief support during this engagement.¹²²

Lawrence Barrett returned this season after several years' absence. Lotta played an engagement, Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Florence were seen in a new Irish play, Eileen Oge, or Dark's the Hour Before Dawn, and Stuart Robson entertained Arch Street Theatre patrons with his usual comedy pieces.¹²³

During Lotta's engagement, the newspapers on October

¹¹⁹ The Inquirer, September 18-30. The review cited above appeared October 2.

¹²⁰ Ibid., March 11-23, 1872.

¹²¹ Charles Fechter (1824-1879) was the original Armande in La Dame aux Camélias. He had made a success in his native country, France, and in England before coming to America. In the last-named country, he was popular in Ruy Blas. He came to America in 1870, and after a successful tour, became manager of the Lyceum Theatre. As a manager, Fechter is credited with bringing about a number of stage innovations.

¹²² The Inquirer, November 6-10, 1871.

¹²³ Ibid., (Barrett) October 2-7, (Lotta) October 9-November 4, (Florence) December 11-23, (Robson) November 13-18, 1871.

10 carried accounts of the Chicago fire. The day following, Mrs. Drew announced that her theatre would give a benefit matinee for the members of the dramatic profession of Chicago, who suffered from the fire. A special benefit matinee was given on October 18, at which Lotta appeared and Mrs. Drew and the members of her company acted in A Happy Pair. All persons connected with the theatre volunteered their services. The Chestnut and Walnut also gave benefits for the less fortunate members of their profession.¹²⁴

Two stars made return engagements in January in an arrangement that must have excited a great deal of comment. The two players played at the rival Arch and Walnut on the same night. One of the actors, J. S. Clarke, one of the owners of the Walnut, and for several years Mrs. Drew's chief competitor, acted Dr. Pangloss in The Heir at Law at Mrs. Drew's house while E. A. Sothern played Lord Dundreary in Our American Cousin at the Walnut. Then the two comedians changed theatres for the afterpieces, Sothern going to the Arch to play Dundreary Married and Settled, and Clark going to his own theatre to act in The Toodles.¹²⁵ The Inquirer commented upon this unusual arrangement at some length:

Such an event as the appearance of two of the leading comedians of the world at two of our theatres on the same

¹²⁴ Ibid., October 10-18, 1871.

¹²⁵ Ibid., January 22-27, 1872.

night is such a rarity that the sensation it has created can hardly be wondered at. That such an arrangement is at all possible argues remarkably well for the relations existing between not only two rival artists, but between the managements of two rival establishments.

Of course, there were good and substantial reasons upon which Messrs. Clarke and Sothern expected to find the doors of the Arch Street Theatre open to them, but those arrangements have not always prevailed. Mrs. Drew, however, proving superior to considerations which might have ruled other managers, at once met her fellow-artists. Arrangements satisfactory to all artists were concluded, and Philadelphia now has the opportunity of witnessing performances that promise to be historic.

Both houses were crowded last evening, the Walnut uncomfortably so.¹²⁶

The same newspaper reported on January 26, that the Sothern-Clarke combination continued as attractive as ever and that there were overflowing houses in each theatre every evening. For the second week, the bill remained the same at the Walnut, but Clarke appeared in The Widow Hunt and The Rivals at the Arch. Sothern continued to be seen in the same piece.¹²⁷

Other performers to appear were Oliver Doud Byron, again in Across the Continent,¹²⁸ the Lydia Thompson Burlesque Troupe,¹²⁹ and Lester Wallack's Company, which appeared in The Veteran.¹³⁰ The appearance of the Wallack Company,

¹²⁶ Ibid., January 23, 1872.

¹²⁷ Ibid., January 29-February 2, 1872.

¹²⁸ Ibid., February 5-16, 1872.

¹²⁹ Ibid., April 29-May 11, 1872.

¹³⁰ Ibid., May 27-June 5, 1872.

which was greeted by indifferent houses the first week, was the first appearance in Mrs. Drew's theatre of a dramatic combination. The Wallack group was somewhat different from some of the later "combinations," for it was not built around a particular star. Nevertheless, it was one step closer to the combination system that was eventually to supersede the stock companies.

Mrs. E. N. Thayer, the veteran comedienne, announced her intention to retire at the end of the season. The Inquirer, in making the announcement, expressed regret that her friends and admirers did not know of her intentions earlier so that a testimonial benefit could have been given for her. The newspaper suggested that it was not too late to do so.¹³¹ However, Mrs. Drew's company seems to have been dispersed by the time of the announcement, and nothing was done about the benefit until the following season.¹³² At Mrs. Thayer's annual benefit night, January 17, Mrs. Drew appeared with her in two pieces, A Lesson in Love and A Victim of Circumstance.¹³³ Mrs. Thayer's acting was frequently

¹³¹ Ibid., May 28, 1872.

¹³² On November 14, 1872, an announcement appeared in the Inquirer to the effect that a committee meeting would be held to arrange for a benefit for the veteran actress. The benefit was given on December 4 at the Academy of Music. Mrs. Drew and her company and orchestra made appearances. Mrs. Drew acted in A Roland for An Oliver. Mrs. Thayer made her final stage appearance in Simpson & Co. supported by her daughter, Alexina Fisher Baker, and her granddaughter, Josephine Baker.

¹³³ Ibid., January 17, 1872.

praised in newspapers, and her retirement must have been a great loss to Mrs. Drew's organization.

Apparently in an effort to meet increased competition, Mrs. Drew revised her policy somewhat this season. Many more stars were booked into the theatre, several of whom were players of some prominence in the profession. Mrs. Drew revived some old comedies during the season, but concentrated on bringing out new pieces. She may have decided to do this because she had many new people in her company, or because there was a definite demand for new entertainment. With the increased number of starring engagements, the whole season had more variety than did the seasons immediately preceding this one. However, the amount of tragedy was negligible, for the house continued to feature comedies.

By increasing the number of stars, particularly ones of prominence in the profession, Mrs. Drew increased her production costs. Thus regardless of whether or not the house was full, she realized less profit from the operation of her house than if she depended upon the efforts of her stock company to provide most of the entertainment. But the theatre was in a period of change and each season the resident stock companies in most of the theatres of the country diminished in importance.

CHAPTER IX

ACTRESS-MANAGER, STAR-COMBINATION THEATRE (1872-1876)

Two pre-season engagements delayed the opening of the Arch Street Theatre's 1872-73 regular dramatic season until September 21.¹ Theatregoers must have been disappointed to find so many of their old favorites missing from the company this season. Mrs. Thayer had retired, and Mrs. Maeder, Mrs. Creese, Miss Price, and Everly had left the company. Hill, Hemple, and some of the bit players were all that remained of Mrs. Drew's once fine stock company. Several of the new players bore family names of people well known in the theatre at that time. There was Blanche DeBar, Florence Cowell, Mary Maddern, Mark Quinlan, Rosalie Jack, and Frank Murdoch. Other new players included Atkins Lawrence, Harry Langdon, and Georgie Dickson. Murphy was still the business manager, Hill was the stage manager, and Professor Charles Weber was the musical director. Hawthorn, who had been scenic artist for some time, continued in that capacity. The theatre had been newly decorated during the summer recess.²

¹ The Inquirer, September 2, 1872, William Horace Lingard and Alice Dunning played an engagement beginning on this date. Susan Denin and Company opened an engagement on September 9.

² Ibid., August 19, 24, 1872.

The opening play was London Assurance, and it was an unfortunate choice, according to the Inquirer reviewer. He stated that this play required a large and talented company, which Mrs. Drew did not have this season. The same reviewer said that as Lady Gay Spanker, Mrs. Drew acted with "all her well-known grace and vivacity, and imparted to it a life-like lightness of spirit infectious to behold." The same reviewer felt that Barton Hill was miscast as Dazzle, a light comedy role.³ The Bulletin gave the play small praise, also. The writer for that newspaper said that it was presented in a "tolerably acceptable manner."⁴

The actress-manager must have decided that her almost new company could not handle the old comedies that she liked to present, for very few of them were seen this season. The Ladies' Battle was one of the few revivals, and it was the play which Mrs. Drew selected in which to present her daughter Miss Georgie (Georgiana) Drew to Philadelphia playgoers for the first time. The Bulletin praised this production and said that Miss Drew, who appeared with her mother, was warmly received. The reviewer for this newspaper also commented:

³ Ibid., September 23, 1872.

⁴ The Bulletin, September 23, 1872.

Miss Drew clearly indicated that she has been trained carefully by such a skilled hand as her mother, and there is little reason to doubt that with good natural abilities and with such discipline she will one day be a thorough artist.⁵

Miss Drew's second appearance was made at another revival performance. The plays were The Rent Day and Married Life.⁶ On March 22, the young lady was given her first benefit performance, appearing in More Precious than Gold. Her brother, John Drew, made his first appearance on the stage the same evening, appearing as Plumper in Cool as a Cucumber.⁷

An article announcing Miss Drew's benefit and young Drew's first appearance, praised their father, John Drew, at some length and said further:

He belonged to a school of actors that is passing away rapidly, and leaving no copy behind we fear. Of that school Mrs. Drew is a noble representation and we would like to hope that her daughter and son are also representations of it.

The reviewer thought that Miss Drew created a favorable impression during her first appearance, and that her faults were "those of inexperience and youth." The same writer went on to say:

Of Mr. Drew we know nothing. But remembering with profound gratitude the pleasure that the mother and

⁵ Ibid., October 28, 1872.

⁶ Ibid., November 9, 1872.

⁷ The Inquirer, March 21, 1873.

father of these children have given the public, and how great and conscientious an artist Mrs. Drew is, and how Mr. Drew was, we trust for their sakes that the old playgoers of Philadelphia will unite on Saturday to give the young players, just entering upon the career by which they are to live, a substantial, hearty, welcome. It may be that for their own sakes they deserve such welcome, but whether this be so or not they deserve it for the sake of those great artists whose children they are, and who for so many years gave of their best to the pleasure and entertainment of the town.

We know of no opportunity so favorable for the public to show its respect for the memory of the great dead comedian, or gratitude to his wife, who survives him, as that which will be presented Saturday night.⁸

It must, indeed, have been difficult for Georgie and John to make appearances in the face of such great expectations. The house was said to have been crowded to the utmost capacity. Both players were criticized for talking too fast, and John was verbally spanked for being too self-confident. The Inquirer reviewer then gave the young players some advice as to how they could overcome their acting faults.⁹

John Drew later gave this account of his mother's reaction to his first appearance:

My mother, who had picked out for me the character of Plumper for my first appearance, went on in the part of the maid that Plumper addressed as "Susan," just to give me confidence. She was greatly annoyed that I took the whole thing so lightly. She said that I was too good. I could not see what she meant,

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., March 24, 1873.

but she gave me to understand that I thought too much of myself. . . . To do what she could to save me from my self-esteem she interpolated at my expense: "What a dreadful young man! I wonder what he will be like when he grows up."¹⁰

It is interesting to note that although she herself spent her early years on the stage as did her two half-sisters, Mrs. Drew did not introduce her own children to the theatre until they reached young womanhood and young manhood. Since Mrs. Drew remained in Philadelphia, except for brief engagements, when the children were very small, their childhood must have been quite normal. This writer was not able to find any evidence that Mrs. Drew's oldest daughter, Louisa, ever appeared on the stage under her own name, even though Lionel Barrymore lists her as an actress on the genealogical table in We Barrymores.

The company appeared in several new pieces during the season, the first being H. J. Byron's Partners in Life.¹¹ The Bulletin said that the "performance on the whole was exceedingly good and reflected much credit upon the company and manager."¹²

Bohemia, said to have been written by a Philadelphian was the next new play.¹³ The Inquirer commented

¹⁰ Drew, My Years on the Stage, pp. 4, 5.

¹¹ The Bulletin, October 21-24, 1872.

¹² Ibid., October 22, 1872.

¹³ The Inquirer, October 28-November 2, 1872.

that the piece was poorly written, but was saved by the acting of Hill, Langdon, Mrs. Drew, Miss DeBar, and Murdoch.¹⁴ Frank Mayo, who played in Murdoch's play, Davy Crockett, for some years, and who was, in fact, seen in it at Mrs. Drew's theatre this season, said that Frank Murdoch,¹⁵ one of the actors in Mrs. Drew's company was the author. In a letter reprinted in Phelps' Players of a Century, Mayo stated that the characters were made up to represent some of the local critics, and they treated the play "most unmercifully" in their reviews. He said that Murdoch died of brain fever without ever having seen Davy Crockett, which was a great success on the stage.¹⁶

Other new plays included The Daisy Farm, Son of the Night, and False Shame, or New Year's Eve.¹⁷ Mrs. Drew was Ghehel in the second play and Mrs. Col. Howard in the third.

The first of the visiting stars to appear this season was Miss Carlotta LaClercq, who was seen in such plays as Plot and Passion, The Lady of Lyons, The Hunchback, and A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing.¹⁸

¹⁴ Ibid., October 29, 1872.

¹⁵ Murdoch (real name Hitchcock) was a nephew of James E. Murdoch.

¹⁶ Phelps, p. 335.

¹⁷ The Bulletin (The Daisy Farm) November 4-9, 1872, (Son of the Night) December 23-28, 1872, (False Shame) February 24-March 1, 1873.

¹⁸ The Inquirer, September 23-October 5, 1872. The actress' name was also spelled LeClerc and LeClerq.

Joseph Prector appeared in his own play, The Red Pocket Book, and received small praise for both his writing and acting. The acting company, particularly Blanche DeBar, was praised for its part in the presentation. Mention was made also of the fine scenic effects, which included the novel one of a ship sinking.¹⁹ The audience again this season was interested in sensational displays, one gathers, because during the second week, the Bulletin reported that the piece was as popular as ever.²⁰

On November 11, Dominick Murray opened in another sensational piece called Escaped from Sing Sing. Two days later the Bulletin reported that the admirers of that type of drama had been "flocking to the Arch." They had an opportunity to see this piece, which probably struck a new low in this type of entertainment, for two weeks.²¹

Miss Adah Gray opened in H. A. Weaver's new play called Who's Wife on December 2, and stayed one week, while C. B. Bishop, a comedian, played a week in a piece called Upper Ten and Lower Twenty. Oliver Doud Byron returned in what was now a perennial piece, Across the Continent. He varied his repertoire a bit by appearing also in Ben

¹⁹ The Bulletin, October 7-19, 1872. The review cited appeared October 8.

²⁰ Ibid., October 16, 1872.

²¹ Ibid., November 11-23, 1872.

McCullough. Frank Mayo, as was mentioned previously, was seen in Davy Crockett.²² Murdoch's play, which, according to John Drew, was not really a dramatization of the life of the hero of the Alamo, had a big scene in which Davy put his arm through the place in the door where an oak bar should have been and kept the howling, hungry wolves out of the cabin.²³

Out of the Streets was another sensational drama based upon Charles Taylor's novel of the same name. It was full of "stirring incidents" and introduced the Keene Brothers in acrobatic feats, and Jule Keene, a Dutch comedian. Mark Smith was seen in 100 Years Old, and Joseph Murphy appeared in an Irish drama called Help. He also was seen in some Irish and German sketches.²⁴

The engagement, which doubtless excited the most attention, was the one featuring Buffalo Bill (W. T. Cody), Texas Jack (J. B. Omohundro), and Ned Buntline (Col. E. Z. C. Judson). For good measure, Buffalo Bill brought along Mlle. Norlacchi, "celebrated danseuse," and a band of Pawnee Indians. They came to Mrs. Drew's theatre in April

²² Ibid., (Gray) December 2-7, (Bishop) December 16-21, 1872, the Inquirer (Byron) January 6-25, (Mayo) February 3-15, 1873.

²³ Drew, My Years on the Stage, p. 32.

²⁴ The Inquirer (Keene) March 10-22, (Smith) March 24-April 4, (Murphy) April 7-19, 1873.

and played to the largest audiences of the season. They shared bills with Miss Bessie Sudlow and C. G. Davenport and Company. Buffalo Bill and company returned during the next month for another short engagement.²⁵

Other players to appear were Lydia Thompson and her Burlesque Troupe, Miss Rosina Vokes and the Vokes Family of entertainers, who appeared in Belles of the Kitchen, and Miss Susan Galton, who was seen in Litchen and Fritzen and other short pieces.²⁶ Occasionally during the latter part of the season Mrs. Drew and some members of her company were seen in an afterpiece. Mrs. Drew, for example, played in one called The Laughing Hyena and in a revival of The Dead Shot.²⁷

The closing date of this season is not quite certain, and it may be that Mrs. Drew had charge of bookings in her house during the summer by this time. At any event, more and more entertainment was scheduled during the summer seasons. This summer Carnecross and Dixey's Minstrels appeared, as did John Thompson, a protean actor, the San Francisco Minstrels, and the Duprez and Benedict Minstrels. The theatre did not close until August 16.²⁸

²⁵ Ibid., April 21-26, May 21-24, 1873.

²⁶ Ibid., (Thompson) April 28-May 3, (Vokes) May 5-17, (Galton) May 19, 20, 1873.

²⁷ Ibid., May 15, 19, 20, 1873.

²⁸ Ibid., May 26-August 16, 1873.

Sam Hemple, a comedian at the Arch Street Theatre, organized a group of players from the theatre into a comedy company. Mrs. Drew was a member of the group which went to Reading to play for two weeks.²⁹ It is not known whether the group appeared in other cities this season, although it is possible that they did since the company was not always occupied on the home stage when a visiting group was present. The change of policy, that of booking more independent groups that did not need a stock company for support, doubtless made some adjustments necessary, otherwise the company would have been idle many weeks during the season.

After having lost so many of her old stock company people at the end of the previous season, Mrs. Drew necessarily had to make some changes in planning her productions for this season. The actress-manager undoubtedly found it difficult if not impossible, to present her dearly beloved old comedies in the manner in which they had been presented in previous years. This may account for the fact that she produced fewer of them than ever before. Perhaps she found it easier, and more satisfying to her public as well, to present the actors in more new pieces, particularly those of a sensational nature which did not

²⁹ Ibid., April 11, 1873.

make great demands on the acting abilities of a new company. Her scene designer and machinist were able to arouse interest in productions by their technical skill and satisfy the public's taste for spectacular pieces. Regardless of whether she approved of the public's growing taste for novelty and excitement in theatrical fare, she was in a competitive business and could not ignore it.

The most notable event in the Arch Street Theatre this season was the presentation of two Drew children, another generation of actors in the family, to the public. Although John and Georgie did not make an outstanding success of their first season, they exhibited an aptitude for acting and were encouraged to continue in the profession. After serving an apprenticeship in their mother's theatre, the two were to achieve enviable reputations as comedians at a later date. Mrs. Drew, however, did not take credit for her son's success in the theatre, for she said later:

. . . I look on him with considerable pride--not personal, for I had nothing to do with his professional advancement, for he came to Daly's Theatre when just twenty-one, and remained there till a few seasons ago, under a much more energetic and capable manager than myself.³⁰

Daly had been able to observe the young actor's work at the beginning of his career, for he was the

³⁰ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 141.

manager of E. L. Davenport's Chestnut Street Theatre this season and was one of Mrs. Drew's competitors. The "Plumperish" young man spent another season in his mother's company under her watchful eye. Drew, at a later date, discussing a production of The School for Scandal in which he received good notices, wrote:

In all these productions of old comedy I had one very great advantage the other members of the cast did not have. During the rehearsals of one of these plays I always talked over both the play and the part I was to play with my mother. She knew how the characters were to be built up, and their traditions, and she knew the stage business which had been tried and found successful.³¹

The trend each season seemed more and more toward booking whole acting companies or entertainment groups, or "combinations," as they were called. Mrs. Drew, however, kept her resident stock company several years longer, quite possibly to give her children much needed stage training.

Late in August the house opened again for some pre-season attractions, the first being Bidwell and McDonough's production of The Black Crook, and the second John E. Owens, comedian, and his company.³²

The 1873-74 dramatic season at the Arch Street Theatre opened on September 22, with a play by Mrs. Martha LaFitte Johnson entitled Justice. This was the

³¹ Drew, My Years on the Stage, p. 117.

³² The Inquirer, August 25-September 6, September 8-20, 1873.

second season that Mrs. Drew had failed to open her house with an old comedy. No mention was made of the company prior to the opening of the season, but the following names were noted in advertisements, reviews, and two extant playbills: Hemple, Wallis (the younger), Miss Maddern, Miss Drew, Miss Hattie O'Neil, Miss Ada Rehan,³³ Louis Aldrich, F. D. Allen, R. F. Russell, John Drew, and several minor players who had been with the company for some years. Charles H. Morton, actor and writer was the stage manager this season, replacing Hill. Murphy was still on the staff.³⁴

The opening play was an unfortunate choice. The Inquirer said that the play would never have but one good

³³ Ada Rehan (1860-1916), whose real name was Crehan, was born in Ireland and came to this country as a young girl. She was the youngest sister of Mrs. Oliver Doud Byron and Miss Hattie O'Neil. According to John Drew, My Years on the Stage, p. 35, his mother hired Mrs. Byron's two sisters at her request, and from Mrs. Byron's letter in their behalf, took the younger girl's name to be Ada C. Rehan, and decided to leave out the "C" in her billing. An Inquirer reviewer on January 22, referred to the actress as Miss Crehan, yet her name appeared as Crehan on a program dated April 7. This program is in the collection of programs and playbills at the Free Library of Philadelphia. Miss Rehan later joined Augustin Daly's company and played with great success under his management. She and John Drew appeared together in a number of comedies under his management.

³⁴ The Inquirer, September 22, 1873.

thing written about it, and that would be its epitaph, "It Died Early."³⁵ For the final performance of it, The Lonely Man of the Ocean was added to the bill.³⁶ The next week, the same newspaper remarked: "With this week the real season of legitimate drama begins at this house. Last week was a mistake."³⁷

Early in the season, while Boucicault's company and Lydia Thompson's Burlesque Troupe occupied the boards at the Arch Street Theatre, Mrs. Drew and some of the members of her company played engagements outside of Philadelphia. According to the Annals of the Reading Stage, she and a group of players, including her daughter and son, appeared in Reading on October 3 in Lost in London and Cool as a Cucumber.³⁸ On October 4, they presented the same two plays at Wilmington, Delaware.³⁹ The program for the last-named appearance noted that this was Mrs. Drew's first appearance in several years. The extent of the outside productions by the company during the season

³⁵ Ibid., September 26, 1873.

³⁶ Ibid., September 27, 1873.

³⁷ Ibid., September 29, 1873.

³⁸ Paul E. Glase, Annals of the Reading Stage, 1791-1948, ed. by Milton W. Hamilton (Historical Review of Berks County, Pennsylvania), p. 45.

³⁹ Theatre Program, Wilmington Delaware, October 4, 1873, in Collection of Theatre Programs, Free Library of Philadelphia. (This collection is not catalogued, and this program is to be found in a collection of loose programs labeled "Wilmington.")

is not known.

The company did not appear on their home stage in another major production until November 3, at which time they were seen in Bartley Campbell's Little Sunshine. Georgie Drew played the title role. The Inquirer thought this play "no better nor worse than its class," and said that it was "well put upon the stage," and the scenery was "striking and effective." The praise given to Miss Drew for her acting sounded much like a review of her mother's early performances: "... a most charming appearance in the character, and acted with great spirit, grace, and fidelity to nature, achieving quite a triumph!"⁴⁰

The company appeared next in a revival of The Streets of New York, and the production was praised and the company was described as excellent. It was given three performances.⁴¹

Mrs. Drew next presented The Poor and Proud of Philadelphia, a dramatization of a recently published popular story. In the cast were Aldrich, Wallis, Georgie Drew, Hemple, and Hattie O'Neil. Several days after the initial performance, the Inquirer reported that the piece had been reasonably successful, and concluded that it was

⁴⁰ The Inquirer, November 3-12, 1873. The review cited appeared on November 4.

⁴¹ Ibid., November 13-15, 1873.

of interest because of the scenery which depicted well-known localities of the city.⁴² When it was continued a second week, the same newspaper was of the opinion that the increased business at this theatre was due to the holiday season rather than to any merit in the play.⁴³

Apparently Mrs. Drew was not discouraged by the poor reception given to Justice, the first play of the season, for she brought out a second one by the same author. It was a local comedy called Fun and was put on the stage in "handsome style."⁴⁴ On January 23, the Inquirer said that the play "deservedly met with good reception."

Augustin Daly's adaptation of Beloit's Parricide, advertised as having been a success at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, was the next production. It was withdrawn to make way for a star's appearance.⁴⁵

Mrs. Drew's appearances this season were not as frequent as in previous ones. Her first was in a new role, that of Madame Bertha in a play called A Mother's Love by Charles H. Merton. The Inquirer predicted that

⁴² Ibid., January 5-20, 1874. The review cited appeared January 9.

⁴³ Ibid., January 12, 1874.

⁴⁴ Ibid., January 21-24, 1874.

⁴⁵ Ibid., January 26-31, 1874.

the return of Mrs. Drew would be "welcomed by theatre-goers generally, and full houses every night" would "attest to the popular appreciation of this excellent artist."⁴⁶

A review in the same newspaper on February 20, commented:

Mrs. Drew appears as Madame Bertha and shows that she has lost none of her old passion and fidelity to nature which made her so deservedly a favorite with the theatre-going public.⁴⁷

On February 23, it reported that Mrs. Drew had lost none of her popularity and that the audiences had increased in size.

Georgie Drew took a benefit on the last day of February, appearing as Esther Eccles in Caste. Her mother acted the role of the Marquise de St. Maur. On this occasion, the Inquirer praised Georgie's desire to succeed, and commented upon her development as an actress in the less than two seasons that she had been on the stage. The reviewer thought that she had fulfilled her youthful promise and went on to say:

It would have been strange if it had been otherwise for she comes legitimately by her talents. The stage will wait long before there appears upon it the worthy successor to Mr. John Drew and Mrs. Drew. . . .

Mrs. Drew still holds her honorable position upon the stage, and during this present week she has won in a comparatively insignificant part (in the admirable play A Mother's Love) a great dramatic triumph such

⁴⁶ Ibid., February 16-27, 1874.

⁴⁷ Ibid., February 20, 1874.

as any artist might be proud to have won. We are reminded of the exquisite delicacy and strength of this performance of the best things that Mrs. Drew has ever done. There was nothing of the matchless art of her earlier days missing; it was all there, refined and elevated, if anything, by the matured intelligence of the highly cultured artist.

Mrs. Drew is one of that old school of actors who sat reverently at the feet of nature and drew their inspiration from nature. There are but few of them yet left upon the stage, among them being William Warren, Mrs. Drew, J. Jefferson, John Gilbert, Lester Wallack; and we recognize in Mrs. Drew one of the truest artists of them all. She seems to live in perpetual youth, growing no older, losing nothing of that wondrous art which charms the refined sense of the public always. She stands all apart from the new school of actors who learn nothing and know nothing of that which they should know.

It is a pleasure to ask that to-night, and every night when she appeals to the public, the daughter of Mrs. John Drew shall receive the compliment of a full house, if not, alone for her own sake, then for her mother's sake.⁴⁸

Apparently Mrs. Drew still succeeded in drawing people into her house by her acting. This season, however, she seemed to deliberately stand aside to give her daughter a chance to play leading roles. Few of the old plays were presented this season and the ones that were brought out were mostly short ones.

Luck--California 1858, a drama by Frederick Lyster suggested by a Bret Harte poem called Her Letter, was the next company offering. Aldrich, Drew, Miss Drew, and Miss O'Neill sustained the leading roles. The Inquirer said

⁴⁸ Ibid., February 28, 1874.

that this drama was "full of interest" and that it possessed a certain freshness that served to distinguish it from the usual hackneyed dramas of frontier life. It also noted that the cast was excellent. The play ran a week.⁴⁹

Peril, or Love at Long Branch, another Bartley Campbell piece was offered and was withdrawn after three days.⁵⁰

During the season, the company played two weeks of benefits for the Police Centennial Fund. Only one week was originally planned, but so many tickets were sold that it was necessary to have the second week.⁵¹

Mrs. Drew booked several new attractions at her theatre this season. The first of these was Dion Boucicault and his company in the play Mimi. Boucicault had appeared under the auspices of Wheatley and Clarke some years before, but it was his first appearance under Mrs. Drew's management. Kitty Blanchard and McKee Rankin were in the company and Katharine Rogers was the star.⁵²

⁴⁹ Ibid., March 9-14, 1874. The review quoted above appeared March 13.

⁵⁰ Ibid., March 16-21, 1874. The Poor and Proud of Philadelphia was brought back to finish out the week.

⁵¹ Ibid., April 13-18, April 27-May 2, 1874.

⁵² Ibid., September 29-October 11, 1873.

Other new players included Miss Bella Golden, new to Philadelphia audiences, who appeared in Madelon and The Wept-of-the-Wish-Ten-Wish, J. J. Wallace in a stereotyped Irish patriot play, The Man from America, Mrs. F. B. Conway (who had once played at the Arch as a regular stock actress) in Led Astray, and an Augustin Daly combination in A Flash of Lightning.⁵³

Several individual stars and companies returned to the Arch Street Theatre again this season. In some instances they were supported by members of Mrs. Drew's company, in others they were self-sufficient. Sometimes afterpieces by the company rounded out the programs. Lydia Thompson and her Burlesque Troupe appeared in two engagements, F. S. Chanfrau, after an absence of several years, returned to play Kit, the Arkansas Traveler with the company's support. Oliver Doud Byren had three pieces in his repertoire this time, McKay, the Hero of the Modoc War, Ben McCullough, and of course, Across the Continent. Dominick Murray appeared again in Escaped from Sing Sing and was seen in another piece of the same calibre, The Gambler's Crime. The Vokes Family of entertainers played three weeks, their most popular piece being Belles of the

⁵³ Ibid., (Golden) February 9, 10, 12-14, (Wallace) March 2-7, (Conway) May 4-9, 1874 (Daly) December 22, 1873-January 3, 1874.

Kitchen. Joseph Murphy also played an engagement this time appearing in Fred Maeder's Maum Cre.⁵⁴

Sam Hemple's Comedy Company, in which Mrs. Drew had played the previous season, was booked for a week of performances in May.⁵⁵ Again this season some members of the regular Arch Street Theatre Company played with Hemple's group, among them being Hemple, Miss Maddern, Phillips, and Hagle. Also in the company were several former members of Mrs. Drew's company, W. Wallis, Jr., Mrs. Creese, and Georgie Dickson.

The regular season at the Arch Street Theatre closed with the benefit tendered to the box office attendants on May 16, Mrs. Drew appearing in a revival of A Victim of Circumstance at that time.⁵⁶ On the following Monday, the Trans-Atlantic Novelty Company appeared at the Arch, and the advertisements for the theatre stated that Joseph D. Murphy was the business agent and John J. Holmes, the box bookkeeper. Both were regular employees of Mrs. Drew, and it is not known whether

⁵⁴ Ibid., (Thompson) October 13-18, 1873, April 20-25, 1874), (Chanfrau) October 20-November 1, (Byron) November 17-December 6, (Murray) December 8-20, 1873, (Vokes) March 23-April 11, (Murphy) February 2-7, 1874.

⁵⁵ Ibid., May 11-15, 1874.

this was a private venture of their own, or whether they acted for Mrs. Drew.⁵⁷

In June, Charles H. Merton presented two of his plays, Three Years in a Mantrap, and The Poor and Proud of Philadelphia, with a company that he had assembled. Quite possibly he leased the theatre for the presentations, for there was no evidence in the advertisements or reviews which would lead one to believe that Mrs. Drew sponsored them.⁵⁸

Again this season, Mrs. Drew attempted to give her patrons variety in entertainment. Except for a couple of weeks of old comedies for the benefit of the police fund, few old plays were given during the season. Mrs. Drew appeared in these, but few others. The emphasis was again on new productions, which the young players could doubtless play better. At any rate, in new plays, they did not run the risk of being compared unfavorably with the fine actors, who had played well-known roles in former years.

John E. Owens again played a pre-season engagement at the Arch Street Theatre, appearing in The Victims and Solon Shingle.⁵⁹ Owens was followed by Sherry's

⁵⁷ Ibid., May 18-30, 1874.

⁵⁸ Ibid., June 1-13, 1874.

⁵⁹ Ibid., September 1-12, 1874.

Dramatic Combination in a play called Rose with Rose Wood and Lewis Morrison in the leading roles.⁶⁰

The regular 1874-75 season opened on September 21, with the company playing Boucicault's Belle Lamar. Prior to the opening of this play, the Inquirer made these comments:

On the 21st instant the Arch Street Theatre Company proper will make its first appearance for the season in Boucicault's play of Belle Lamar, which has had an extraordinary success in New York. It will be a great satisfaction to welcome Mrs. Drew to the stage again, for she and her exquisite art bloom in a youth that is gracious and perennial to every intelligent theatre goer. It is understood that she has gathered to her support an excellent company and her theatre has been so elegantly decorated and made so luxuriously comfortable during the summer recess that it is now one of the most attractive places of amusement in the country. Mrs. Drew has always been a liberal manager, and it is, therefore, the common wish that she may again be a successful one.⁶¹

The preceding review carries a hint that at the beginning of the season Mrs. Drew was not enjoying success as a manager, a suggestion which is hardly a surprise, since reviews and newspaper advertisements had given the impression that Mrs. Drew's theatre was not the theatre of a few seasons before.

Again this season there was no announcement of the members of the company at the opening of the season. The names of players noted in advertisements and reviews

⁶⁰ Ibid., September 14-19, 1874.

⁶¹ Ibid., September 8, 1874.

included Georgie and John Drew, Emily Baker, Sam Hemple, Atkins Lawrence, Milton Nobles, F. S. Russell, and W. H. Jones. Murphy was still in the position of business manager, and Charles H. Morton was the stage manager.⁶²

After the first performance of the new play, the Inquirer remarked that Mrs. Drew had done everything possible to make Belle Lamar successful. It said that she set the play on the stage superbly, and "on the whole presented its difficult personages acceptably." The reviewer was of the opinion that there was excellent material in Mrs. Drew's new company, in fact, better than there was in Belle Lamar, and he felt that with a better play the company would have a chance to assert its excellence.⁶³ A few days later the same newspaper remarked that the play had had indifferent success, and what there was was due more to the "attractiveness of the house, the superb manner in which it has been put on the stage, and the creditable acting of the company."⁶⁴ On September 28, Duel in the Snow was added to the bill and the play continued through October 2.⁶⁵

⁶² Ibid., September 11, 1874-May 1, 1875.

⁶³ Ibid., September 22, 1874.

⁶⁴ Ibid., September 25, 1874.

⁶⁵ Ibid., September 28-October 2, 1874.

On October 3, the company appeared in Love's Doctor and Nick of the Woods, during the evening performance. The first-named play was repeated November 2 when a star was ill and could not make a scheduled appearance.⁶⁶

The company's next production was called Law in New York. It played a week and was brought back once the following month. Wives as They Were and Maids as They Are shared the bill on the last occasion. It was Mrs. Drew's first appearance in a favorite old play this season.⁶⁷

During the season, however, she was seen in several others including The School for Scandal. Following this presentation, the Inquirer stated:

The announcement of Mrs. John Drew as Lady Teazle was sufficient to draw an excellent house despite inclement weather last night, and it is enough to say that she fully realized the anticipation of those who have seen her when she was without a rival in that character. Indeed, we do not see how that distinction can be justly denied her even now. Certainly, we have not in many years had a "Lady Teazle" so perfectly according to the ideal of the character as was exhibited in Mrs. Drew's impersonation last evening. As to the remaining characters little can be said of a favorable character. The company is entirely inadequate to a play requiring so powerful a cast, and in attempting they unavoidably invite unfavorable comparisons.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Ibid., October 3, November 2, 1874.

⁶⁷ Ibid., October 12-17, November 7, 1874.

⁶⁸ Ibid., December 29, 1874.

Mrs. Drew did not let this derogatory comment about her company dissuade her from her intention to revive old comedies during the season. Apparently she could see greater possibilities of success than could the reviewer. At the beginning of the second week, the Inquirer remarked that the company, encouraged by the success of the first week had begun a second.⁶⁹ Later he remarked that the return to old comedies was "a step in the right direction toward the revival of the old glories of this favorite theatre." According to his report, the second week was even more successful than the first. The reporter expressed the hope that the plays would be repeated at an early date.⁷⁰

A new play, Woman of the Day, by Morton, the stage manager, was seen in December. An opening announcement stated that the play would be produced in "handsome style, and, with Mrs. Drew in the leading role," would possess "attractions for her numerous admirers." The writer also commented that her reappearance on the stage was one of "the most gratifying events of the season."⁷¹ She played Mrs. DeWitt Killmeyer in this play, and after the first presentation, the same reviewer commented:

⁶⁹ Ibid., January 4, 1875.

⁷⁰ Ibid., January 9, 1875.

⁷¹ Ibid., December 14, 1874.

Mrs. John Drew as Mrs. DeWitt Killmeyer was excellent, and certainly has not appeared to better advantage in a long time, reviving old memories of her triumphs upon our stage, her reappearance upon which was one of the pleasantest events of the season.⁷²

On the last night of the run of Merton's play, the old play, The Robber's Wife was added to the bill. Women of the Day was presented twice more later in the month.⁷³

As the result of his performance of a light comedy role in the stage manager's play, John Drew was invited by Augustin Daly to join his company. Drew said that he talked the matter over with his mother whom he thought had been convinced by his work in the play that he might have a career on the stage, and she advised him to accept the offer. In January, 1875, he left his mother's company and reported to Daly's Fifth Avenue Theatre.⁷⁴ Mrs. Drew sold the New York rights to this play to Daly, who produced it in that city.⁷⁵

In less than a month, Mrs. Drew, no doubt encouraged by the success of Merton's play, produced a second one by the same author. It was called The Masons of Our City. It was "finely mounted" and the characters

⁷² Ibid., December 15, 1874.

⁷³ Ibid., December 19, 1874.

⁷⁴ Drew, My Years on the Stage, pp. 39-41.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

were "generally speaking well rendered by the company."⁷⁶

Another company presentation was Fred Maeder's Nobody's Daughter.⁷⁷

This season, for the first time in many a year, Mrs. Drew supported one of the visiting stars. She appeared with John Brougham during both his engagements. During the first one, she appeared in a production of London Assurance given for his benefit.⁷⁸ When he was there a second time, she was Mrs. Ormsby Delmaine and Brougham was Captain Murphy Maguire in The Serious Family.⁷⁹ Brougham delighted playgoers with Playing with Fire, Flies in the Web, and The Lottery of Life.

Other players to reappear at the Arch this season included: William J. Florence, Joseph Murphy, Dominick Murray, Carlotta LeClerq, and Oliver Doud Byron.⁸⁰ One must assume that their presentations had audience appeal, or Mrs. Drew would not have had them return.

⁷⁶ The Inquirer, January 11-16, 1874. The review cited appeared January 15.

⁷⁷ Ibid., March 1-3, 6, 1875.

⁷⁸ Ibid., January 29, 1875. Brougham's engagement was January 25-30, 1875.

⁷⁹ Ibid., March 8-13, 1875.

⁸⁰ Ibid., (Florence) January 18-21, 1875, (Murphy) October 26-31, (Murray) November 9-21, (LeClerq) November 23-28, 1874, (Byron) February 1-27, 1875.

Several new players were engaged for star appearances at the Arch Street Theatre this season. On October 3, a Miss Nellie Houghton made her debut in The Lady of Lyons, and in the spring, a Miss Helen Houghton played an engagement in The Hunchback and Jane Eyre.⁸¹ It is not known whether this was the same actress, but it is possible that it was.

An actor named Theodore Hamilton appeared in the play Glancarty by Tom Taylor. Hamilton was supported by the Arch Street Company, and the play was well received.⁸²

The most interesting new player to appear was probably Miss Adelaide Neilson,⁸³ the celebrated English actress. Miss Neilson was scheduled to appear on November 2, but illness delayed her appearance until the following day. She was seen in Romeo and Juliet, The Lady of Lyons, The Hunchback, and As You Like It.⁸⁴ On November 6, the Inquirer reported that the house had been crowded all week.

An actress who called herself Miss Imogene made

⁸¹ Ibid., October 3, 1874 and April 12-15, 1875.

⁸² Ibid., October 5-10, 1874.

⁸³ Adelaide Neilson (1848-1880) was best known for her roles in Shakespeare's plays.

⁸⁴ The Inquirer, November 3-7, 1874.

her first appearance in Philadelphia in Martha LaFitte Johnson's Ingemisce, the Convict's Daughter. She was able to appear only two nights. When she became ill, Georgie Drew took over her role and the Inquirer reported that she filled it "with entire satisfaction to her audiences and no little credit to herself."⁸⁵

The Carroll Family appeared in Bartley Campbell's The Orphans, or Stolen from Home. They were supported by the theatre company.⁸⁶

Another new actress to appear for the first time in Philadelphia was Miss Alice Kingsbury, who appeared in some of the pieces made popular by Maggie Mitchell, such as Fanchon and Little Barefoot.⁸⁷

The J. H. Stoddart Combination appeared in a piece called The Long Strike in April, and Lina Meyer's German Opera Bouffe Company presented Girofle-Girofla during the same month.⁸⁸

The end of the season was not clearly designated but after May 1, Mrs. Drew's name did not appear in the

⁸⁵ Ibid., December 4, 1874. Miss Imogene played the role on November 30 and December 1, Miss Drew, December 2-5.

⁸⁶ Ibid., December 7-12, 1874.

⁸⁷ Ibid., March 29-April 3, 1875.

⁸⁸ Ibid., (Stoddart) April 19-24, (Meyer) April 26-May 1, 1875.

theatre advertisements. During the summer season, Aimee and her Opera Bouffe Company, Mrs. B. C. Howard and her company in Uncle Tom's Cabin, the Peak Family of Swiss Bell Ringers, Neil Bryant's Minstrels, The Transatlantic Novelty Company, Saulsbury's Troubadours, Haverly's Minstrels, Harrigan and Hart and their comic opera The Doyle Brothers, and Rose and Harry Watkins in The Pioneers in America were all on the boards of the Arch Street Theatre.⁸⁹

On April 29, Mrs. Drew appeared in New York at the Academy of Music in a benefit for the Dan Bryant fund, Bryant having died earlier in the month. John Brougham and Mrs. Barney Williams were also on the program. Mrs. Drew appeared in Simpson & Co. in a cast which included Fanny Morant, Kitty Blanchard, and F. F. Mackay.⁹⁰

An innovation at Mrs. Drew's house this season was the beginning of matinee performances. Later the actress remarked: "I clung with such tenacity to the old customs that we were the last to take up matinées."⁹¹

Artistically this season seems to have been somewhat more satisfying than some immediately preceding it.

⁸⁹ Ibid., May 3-September 4, 1875.

⁹⁰ Odell, IX, 594.

⁹¹ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 117.

Again the actress-manager enjoyed the satisfaction of having old comedies well received at her house. With some exceptions, the visiting performers seemed to be of a somewhat higher calibre. The new plays, while hardly great or even good from a literary standpoint, were the popular pieces of the day. Mrs. Drew introduced several by local writers during the season. Either the new additions greatly improved the stock company, or the fact that the members learned to play together in a better fashion, brought about better notices for them this season. At the end of the season, the actress-manager must have felt some degree of pride in the progress her children had made in the acting profession. She must also have been pleased with the cordial receptions she received when she once again appeared in favorite roles. It is not known whether this season was more profitable than the ones immediately preceding it, but the programs presented were certainly better. It is doubtless safe to venture that Mrs. Drew's profits were never as high again under star and combination systems as they were when a stock company furnished most of the entertainment offered by the house.

The 1875-76 season at Mrs. John Drew's Arch Street Theatre, the last one in which Mrs. Drew had a regular stock company in her theatre, opened on September 6, and with a production by an outside company. Daly's Fifth Avenue Theatre Company, of which John Drew was now a

member, opened the season with Bonanza.⁹² Young Drew was praised by the Inquirer reviewer for his improvement in acting; the reviewer referred to the "beautiful art which the talents of both his mother and father have adorned." The reviewer also praised the play from the production standpoint, and again commented upon the taste and liberality with which Mrs. Drew mounted the plays in her theatre.⁹³

The company engaged for the season appeared for the first time in the support of E. L. Davenport, the first star to appear. Indeed, the company presented but few pieces this season by themselves, even though they were called the "Star Company." This name was probably revived because Mrs. Drew took the company with her to Baltimore and Richmond to fulfill engagements while her own stage was occupied with visiting attractions.⁹⁴

Among the players noted in the company this season were Alexina Fisher Baker, Miss Josephine Baker (who later married John Drew), Georgie Drew, W. H. Wallis, Edwin Price, Milnes Levick, Rose Goodall, and Sam Hemple.⁹⁵

⁹² The Inquirer, September 6-19, 1875.

⁹³ Ibid., September 7, 1875.

⁹⁴ Ibid., October 7, 1875. This newspaper stated that she was to appear in The School for Scandal in these cities.

⁹⁵ Ibid., September 6, 1875-June 10, 1876.

During Davenport's engagement, A New Way to Pay Old Debts, Hamlet, Richard III, Othello, Richelieu, and Macbeth were presented, and Miss Drew seems to have been the leading lady of the company.⁹⁶

The first production in which the company appeared by itself was Harvey Birch, an adaptation of James Fenimore Cooper's The Spy.⁹⁷ Other pieces in which the stock members were featured included a new comedy, Running a Corner, with Mrs. Drew in the role of Elvira Bangs. During part of the run of this play, the comedy shared bills with The Robber's Wife, and with The Spitfire.⁹⁸ Mrs. Drew was then seen in A Bold Stroke for a Husband, Leap Year, Simpson & Co., She Stoops to Conquer, and Grist for the Mill, and a number of unidentified afterpieces. At her daughter's farewell benefit, she appeared with Georgie in Pygmalion and Galatea. Miss Drew left the company to go to Daly's in New York, also.⁹⁹

Two players who had been minor players in the Arch Street Company some years before returned as stars this season. Miss Fanny Davenport, who had been in Mrs. Drew's

⁹⁶ Ibid., September 21-October 2, 1875.

⁹⁷ Ibid., December 6-11, 1875.

⁹⁸ Ibid., January 31-February 10, 1876.

⁹⁹ Ibid., September 6, 1875-June 10, 1876. Miss Drew's farewell was given at the evening performance, April 15.

company, played in The School for Scandal, Frou Frou, and Oliver Twist during her engagement.¹⁰⁰ John McCullough, who had been a member of the company several seasons before Mrs. Drew took over the management, also returned as a star. After leaving the Arch, McCullough had joined Forrest, and when he became a star, he played in many of Forrest's old roles.¹⁰¹

Other players and companies to play return engagements included: Edwin Adams, Oliver Doud Byron, the Vokes Family, Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams, Rose Wood and Lewis Morrison, and Joseph Murphy.¹⁰²

Several new players and combinations made appearances at Mrs. Drew's theatre this season. The most spectacular production was the one given during the holiday season. The spectacle also ushered in the year 1876, the year of Philadelphia's Centennial Exposition.¹⁰³ Miss Adah Richmond was the star of this spectacle, the title of which was Ahmed. Mlle. Remoldberg was premier danseuse of

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., November 22-27, 1875.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., February 21-March 4, 1876.

¹⁰² Ibid., (Adams) November 15-20, (Byron) November 29-December 4, 1875, February 14-19, 1876, (Vokes) October 25-30, 1875, May 15-June 3, 1876, (Williams) January 24-29, (Wood and Morrison) January 10-15, (Murphy) June 5-10, 1876.

¹⁰³ The exposition did not open until May 10, however.

a group of eighty ballet dancers that appeared. The house was overflowing at the first production. The

Inquirer commented:

This is certainly one of the most magnificent spectacles that has ever been placed upon the Philadelphia stage. A continual succession of dazzling coups d'oeil testify to the enterprise of the production, and make good the assertion that no cost has been spared whereby the gorgeousness of the effect could be enhanced.¹⁰⁴

Miss Richmond left the cast on the first of January, and Miss Gertie Granville took over her role, a change which the Inquirer insisted was for the better. There were reports that the house was crowded nightly.¹⁰⁵ Perhaps Mrs. Drew could not resist the temptation to present one last spectacle while she still had a stock company, for she doubtless had a fondness for them since her early days with Madame Celeste, and since her success in Fortunio, and The Fair One with the Golden Locks.

Other players and combinations to appear for the first time were: Miss Augusta Dargon (said to have been especially engaged to play in a drama based upon Tennyson's Queen Mary), Mrs. J. A. Oates' Comic Opera Company in Girofle- Girofle and Madame Angot's Child, The Union Square Company in The Two Orphans, G. Fawcett Rowe in Little Em'ly,

¹⁰⁴ The Inquirer, December 20, 1875-January 8, 1876. The review cited appeared December 21.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., January 1-8, 1876.

Rose Macauley in Frou Frou, East Lynne, Romeo and Juliet, Lucretia Borgia, and Oliver Twist, Miss Bessie Darling in Magnolia, Georgia Jubilee Singers in Uncle Tom's Cabin, Robert McWade in Rip Van Winkle, H. S. Murdoch and Kate Williams in Nick, Tony Pastor and his troupe, G. H. McDermott in Sentenced to Death, Rose Eyttinge in Rose Michel, Mrs. John T. Raymond and Co. in Ferreal, Kate Putnam and Co. in Little Nell and the Marchioness, Jane Eyre, Fanchon, and Little Barefoot.¹⁰⁶

The house remained open during the summer, no doubt to accommodate the exposition visitors. Again it is not known whether Mrs. Drew had charge of the booking and engaged the companies, or whether she merely sublet her house. Her name appeared at the masthead in the advertising except during the time that Aimee and her Opera Bouffe Company was present. The advertisement changed in size and character during the week they were on the stage, June 26-July 1.

The summer fare consisted of The Harrigan and Hart Combination in The Doyle Brothers with the New York Sixty-ninth Regiment in Miniature, Aimee and her Opera Bouffe, The Saulsbury Troubadours in Patchwork, Miss Annie V. Van Keenig and her company, and the Alabama Colored Jubilee Singers, in Uncle Tom's Cabin. The summer season closed

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., October 4, 1875-June 24, 1876.

with Amour, a spectacle. The advertisement and review did not indicate who was responsible for this piece which seems not to have been very well executed.¹⁰⁷

This season Mrs. Drew had a double expense, the stock company, and the stars and combinations that she booked into her house that did not need the support of her company. To keep her players busy, and possibly to give her daughter some experience on the road, Mrs. Drew took her company on tour. It may be that Mrs. Drew kept the stock company longer than it was practicable to do so in order to give her children a start in their theatrical careers. After Georgie left for New York, she found it no longer necessary to maintain the company. More and more attention had turned to the combinations, and some theatres had converted to them completely. With so many combinations on tour, it became increasingly difficult to engage and maintain a good stock company.

Mrs. Drew was not the only theatre manager with problems. E. L. Davenport had given up his lease on the Chestnut Theatre largely because it was not possible for him to assemble a fine company. Susan Galton tried to turn the Chestnut into a comic opera house and failed. Shock and Palmer's Union Square Company played there for a time in 1874, and the house had three managers in 1875.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., June 12-July 29, 1876.

Duprez and Benedict operated it as a minstrel house for a time, then George K. Goodwin, lessee of the Walnut, used it to bring out the theatrical sensation of the year, The Two Orphans. Finally, William D. Gemmill, J. Frederick Seott, and F. F. Mackay took over the lease and were fortunate enough to assemble a good stock company. They operated the house as a stock theatre for the next five years and seemed to withstand the competition of the rival combination houses.¹⁰⁸

The Walnut remained a stock house until 1876, when Goodwin, who had amassed a fortune popularizing the dollar stores, took over the management and began booking some combinations into the house. He retained the stock company for a time, but dispensed with their services during the time the visiting companies occupied the stage.¹⁰⁹ This practice might have been profitable for the manager, but it must have been difficult for the actor who depended upon work for a livelihood.

With the passing of a permanent resident stock company from the Arch Street Theatre, the great days of Mrs. Drew's stock productions and the yearly revivals of old comedies became memories for that theatre's patrons.

¹⁰⁸ Jackson, II, 431.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., IV, 1164.

Although she recruited companies for special productions occasionally during the next few years, the results were not particularly happy. The actress-manager said later that the public seemed to miss the old favorites and not care so much for the new ones, and the house did not do as well under the combination system as before.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 117.

CHAPTER X

ACTRESS-MANAGER, STAR-COMBINATION THEATRE (1876-1879)

Before the regular 1876-77 season began at Mrs. John Drew's Arch Street Theatre, W. H. Leak and Company appeared in Under the Willows. The Fieldings followed in True Grit and Tyler and Moffit's Humpty Dumpty was seen.¹

Since the Arch Street Theatre did not have its resident stock company this season, Mrs. Drew having disbanded it at the end of the previous one, visiting stars had to bring their own companies, or other arrangements had to be made for their support. This was not always a satisfactory arrangement because good companies were difficult to assemble. Frequently the companies that traveled with the star were inferior, either because the manager was not able to find capable support, or because the star preferred not to have outstanding people in his company. This was one of the inherent weaknesses of the so-called combination system, a weakness that continues to the present day.

Mrs. D. P. Bowers supported by J. C. McCollom and the New Dramatic Company, opened the season in Led Astray.²

¹ The Inquirer, August 21-September 9, 1876.

² Ibid., September 11-16, 1876.

Strangely enough, Mrs. Drew appeared in the same play the very next week. She was supported by W. H. Leak and Company.³ Mrs. Drew's appearances may have been in the nature of "fill in" performances, because Miss Fanny Davenport was originally advertised for the week and apparently did not arrive to fill the engagement

Miss Davenport arrived on September 25 in Pique.⁴ It is not known whether Mrs. Drew supplied both a company and the mounting for Miss Davenport's play. A reviewer called Miss Davenport's appearance "the leading card of Mrs. John Drew's managerial hand," and said that the "support afforded her by Mrs. Drew" was in every respect satisfactory, and "the applause cordial enough to content the most exacting of favorites."⁵

Mrs. Drew seems to have arranged for a company to support herself in several appearances during the season. She appeared in The School for Scandal for a week in November.⁶

On December 13, Mrs. Drew with a volunteer company, which included Charles E. Thorne, presented Led Astray for

³ Ibid., September 18-23, 1876.

⁴ Ibid., September 25-October 7, 1876.

⁵ Ibid., September 26, 1876.

⁶ Ibid., November 20-25, 1876.

the benefit of the sufferers of the Brooklyn Theatre Fire.⁷ A former member of her company, Claude Burroughs, perished in that fire.

The actress-manager appeared in another benefit performance the following month. This one was given at the Walnut Street Theatre for E. A. Marshall, a former manager of that house. Mrs. Drew and Mr. Griffiths, who had been a member of her company for many years, appeared in "the Screen Scene" from The School for Scandal. E. L. Davenport recited the "Seven Ages of Man," Dodworth's Walnut Street Theatre orchestra played, and the Walnut Company presented Married Life.⁸

Later, Mrs. Drew appeared at a benefit for the box office keepers at her theatre, but the bill was not announced.⁹

During the season, Mrs. Drew acted in the support of one visiting actor, E. A. Sothern. The veteran comedian appeared for an autumn engagement and was seen in Our American Cousin. He returned again in the spring and played for seven weeks. During the last engagement, he was seen, "aided by a carefully selected company," in Our American Cousin, The Hornet's Nest, David Garrick, Brother

⁷ Ibid., December 13, 1876.

⁸ Ibid., January 18, 1877.

⁹ Ibid., June 14, 1877.

Sam, The Crushed Tragedian, and Home. The last-named, a play by Robertson, featuring Sothern as Colonel White and Mrs. Drew as Mrs. Pinchbeck, was given during the sixth week of his engagement.¹⁰ The Inquirer praised Sothern's acting and remarked that he was fortunate to have "such admirable support as Mrs. Drew afforded in her rendition of 'Mrs. Pinchbeck.'" The writer called Mrs. Drew "one of the most finished actresses on the American stage," and said that she played "in a manner worthy of her reputation."¹¹

Other players or companies to play return engagements this season were Frank Mayo, who was again seen in Davy Crockett; Mrs. J. A. Oates English Opera Company, which repeated the same operas heard the previous season; the Boucicault Company in Forbidden Fruit; Rose Eytinge in Miss Sarah Multon and Rose Michel; Oliver Doud Byron in his favorite piece, Across the Continent, complete with railroad tracks and a puffing locomotive on stage; and Edwin Booth, who had not been seen in this theatre in some years.¹²

¹⁰ Ibid., March 12-April 28, 1877.

¹¹ Ibid., April 17, 1877.

¹² Ibid., (Mayo) October 9-21, (Oates) November 6-18, (Boucicault) December 11-23, 1876, (Eytinge) January 8-20, (Byron) February 5-10, (Booth) February 19-March 10, 1877.

It is not known whether Booth supplied his own company, or whether Mrs. Drew assembled one for his appearances. At any event, it seems to have been generally poor. Milnes Levick, who had been with Mrs. Drew's last company, received favorable mention, but Miss Clara Jennings, the leading lady, consistently received unfavorable reviews. Booth was seen in Hamlet, The Fool's Revenge, The Lady of Lyons, Richelieu, Othello, The Merchant of Venice, Don Caesar de Bazan, Richard III, Ruy Blas, The Taming of the Shrew, and Much Ado About Nothing.

Mrs. D. P. Bowers returned for a second engagement in January, appearing in Mary Stuart and some of her old favorites as Lady Audley's Secret, Camille, East Lynne, Lucretia Borgia, The Jealous Wife, and Jane Shore. Led Astray was presented again also. Mrs. Bowers was supported by J. C. McCollom and Company, but the support was termed weak.¹³

Several stars and combinations new to Arch Street Theatre audiences also appeared. Emily Soldene and her English Opera Company performed several operas during their two engagements, among them, Gilbert and Sullivan's Trial by Jury.¹⁴ Mrs. Drew's patrons were given the opportunity

¹³ Ibid., January 22-February 3, 1877.

¹⁴ Ibid., December 25-January 6, 1877 and April 30-May 5, 1877.

to see the veteran actor Ben DeBar¹⁵ in his well-known interpretation of Falstaff in Henry IV, and The Merry Wives of Windsor.¹⁶ Miss Effie Ellsler, a protege of E. A. Sothern, was well received in Bartley Campbell's A Heroine in Rags.¹⁷

Mrs. Drew gave Miss Anna Dickinson, Philadelphia lecturer who had turned to acting and playwriting, an opportunity to be seen in her home city. Miss Dickinson's efforts as an actress and writer were disparaged by the press of other cities, according to Philadelphia newspaper reports, but that did not deter her admirers on opening night. Miss Dickinson appeared in A Crown of Thorns, and Laura.¹⁸ The Inquirer was kind in its review of her play, A Crown of Thorns, but said that as Anne Boleyn, the leading character, Miss Dickinson merely dressed her in the ill-fated queen's clothes and did not act the part.¹⁹

The date of the last day of the season is not clear. The box office attendants were given a benefit on June 14, but the two bills immediately preceding it would

¹⁵ Benedict DeBar (1812-1877), favorite southern and western comedian and theatre manager, played Falstaff more than 150 times. This was his last tour in the role.

¹⁶ The Inquirer, February 12-17, 1877.

¹⁷ Ibid., May 7-26, 1877.

¹⁸ Ibid., November 28-December 9, 1876.

¹⁹ Ibid., November 28, 1876.

lead one to believe that the summer season had already begun. Harrigan and Hart's Minstrels and Simmons and Slocum's Minstrels were on the boards before the benefit.²⁰

Some time during the season, Mrs. Drew went to San Francisco to appear at John McCullough's Baldwin Theatre. McCullough, who was trying to run two theatres concurrently, had financial difficulty, and according to a history of the theatre in San Francisco, "made a desperate bid for public favor by presenting Louisa Drew." But, according to the historian, "Mrs. Drew's brilliant revivals of The School for Scandal and other high comedies failed to draw a public that was floundering in the seas of depression."²¹ Barton Hill was stage manager at one of McCullough's theatres, but the theatre historian did not indicate whether he was also associated with the theatre Mrs. Drew visited. Both he and McCullough were well acquainted with Mrs. Drew's acting ability, so the invitation may have come from either of them. This engagement in San Francisco, as this writer has been able to determine, was Mrs. Drew's first trip to the west coast. it is not known whether she played any other engagements on the same trip.

²⁰ Ibid., May 28-June 9, 1877.

²¹ Edmond M. Gagey, The San Francisco Stage, A History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), p. 151.

This season might be deemed successful if one considers the array of talent booked into the Arch Street Theatre. The pecuniary rewards may not have been great, for some of the players were at the top of their profession and could demand substantial remuneration for their efforts.

Mrs. Drew brought both serious and comic drama to her patrons this season, and gave those who were interested an opportunity to see operas, novelty entertainment, and sensational melodramas.

Charles R. Gardner was Mrs. Drew's business manager this season. It is not known how much authority he had in the operation of the theatre. Since Mrs. Drew was on hand, at least during the early part of the season, it is doubtful if she turned over the business arrangement entirely to the manager.

The 1877-78 season at the Arch Street Theatre opened upon a newly decorated house. The Inquirer gave the following description of the changes made during the summer recess:

Old playgoers will hardly know the theatre, so industriously at work during the recess have been the carpenter and upholsterer and scenic artist. The Arch is about the most comfortable theatre in the city, but it sadly needed rejuvenation, and the money expended for that purpose will be money well laid out. With new carpets and chandeliers, with walls tastefully painted fresh, and brand-new drop scene, the Arch may be said to have renewed its youth.²²

²² The Inquirer, August 13, 1877.

The house opened August 13 with Haverly's Minstrels in what may have been considered a pre-season engagement, although there seems to have been no formal announcement as to the opening of the regular dramatic season.²³

Robert McWade returned to the theatre in Rip Van Winkle in another engagement which may have been considered a pre-season presentation.²⁴

Miss May Howard was the first new star to appear for the season and was seen in Bartley Campbell's Hearts.²⁵ She was supported by a company which included two former Arch Street Theatre players, Louis James and Georgie Drew.²⁶

Madame Helene Modjeska was scheduled to appear in January, but she begged to have the engagement postponed until spring because of her success in New York. Mrs. Drew, however, refused to release her from her engagement because she felt that she must keep the faith of her patrons, who had been promised an opportunity to see the great Polish actress.²⁷ Madame Modjeska arrived on schedule and was seen in Camille. The Inquirer made the

²³ Ibid., August 13-25, 1877.

²⁴ Ibid., August 27-September 1, 1877.

²⁵ Ibid., September 3-8, 1877.

²⁶ Miss Drew married Maurice Barrymore (1847-1905) on December 31, 1876, but continued to appear in Philadelphia under her maiden name.

²⁷ The Inquirer, January 22, 1878.

following comment upon her first appearance:

She has stirred the notoriously phlegmatic theatre-goers of Philadelphia to something like a frenzy of excited admiration, and had justified the most rapturous praise which the most eloquent of her critics had given her.²⁸

The same reported said that she was called before the curtain "amid a storm of cheers and handclapping." The actress was engaged for only one week.²⁹

Players of less importance were Miss Maggie Moore and J. C. Williamson, who were seen in Struck Oil during their first engagement and the same play and The Chinese Question in their second.³⁰ George Rignold acted in Henry V with Marie Brabant.³¹

Madame Elizabeth von Stamwitz was another new star to appear. She was seen in Lady Jane Gray and seems to have been supported by a company assembled for her engagement. Miss Georgie Drew appeared and was singled out for special praise for her acting, but the remainder of the supporting company was called "atrociously bad." Madame von Stamwitz was hampered by a "heavy accent" and "the dead weight" of the supporting company.³²

²⁸ Ibid., January 29, 1878.

²⁹ Ibid., January 28-February 2, 1878.

³⁰ Ibid., October 29-November 3, 1877 and May 13-18, 1878.

³¹ Ibid., December 3-9, 1877.

³² Ibid., December 17-22, 1877. The review quoted above appeared December 18, 1877.

Others included Miss Kate Claxton, already a favorite player, in The Two Orphans, John A. Stevens in his original play, Unknown, and Genevieve Rogers and F. E. Aikens Dramatic Company in Maude Muller.³³

A number of players who had been well received in other seasons also made return engagements, including Oliver Dowd Byron, Effie Ellsler, Rose Eyttinge, Fanny Davenport, Lawrence Barrett, Lydia Thompson (her burlesque troupe was now called the Colville Folly Co.), the Lingards, and Adah Richmond's Burlesque Company.³⁴

Several dramatic companies also appeared during the season. The Union Square Company was first in The Danicheffs with the "original casts, costumes, and scenery." In the company were James O'Neill, Fanny Morant, Charles R. Thorne, Jr., and Mrs. Clara Fisher Maeder.³⁵ Mrs. Maeder, years later, related the following interesting anecdote in connection with this visit:

When Mrs. John Drew had the Arch Street Theatre,

³³ Ibid., (Claxton) January 7-12, (Stevens) March 5-9, (Rogers) March 25-30, 1878.

³⁴ Ibid., (Byron) November 26-December 1, 1877, February 18-23, 1878 (Ellsler) December 11-15, 1877, (Eyttinge) January 14-19, (Davenport) April 1-6, (Barrett) April 8-20, (Thompson) February 11-16, 1878, (Lingards) September 11-22, 1877, (Richmond) June 10-15, 1878.

³⁵ Ibid., September 24-October 22, 1877.

Philadelphia, I was with her several seasons. I had always been well received in the Quaker City, from my first visit in 1828. I remember in 1877 or 1878 I went with the Union Square Co. to Philadelphia to play in "The Danicheffs"--then the great success of the Union Square Theatre. Miss Fanny Morant, who had never before appeared there, and was to play the leading part was talking to Mary Wells and myself, and Mrs. Drew came on the stage and greeted us. Miss Morant said a little pointedly, "Mrs. Drew, I was just wondering what sort of reception we are likely to get tonight from these cold philadelphians." Louisa looked at her quietly a moment, and then said mildly: "Well, I don't know, but if Mrs. Maeder was to walk on alone, you wouldn't say that they were cold."³⁶

The company finished their engagement with Smoke, and The Two Orphans and returned in the spring in A Celebrated Case.³⁷

Augustin Daly's company appeared in Around the Clock, or Life in New York in Twelve Phases, which had numerous tableaux, startling situations, and realistic scenic effects. The Inquirer said that it was well suited for the galleries for whom it was intended.³⁸

H. E. Abbey's Park Theatre Company also made an appearance. It was seen in a piece called Champagne and Oysters.³⁹

³⁶ Maeder, pp. 74, 75.

³⁷ The Inquirer, April 22-May 11, 1878.

³⁸ Ibid., December 24-31, 1877. The review cited appeared December 25.

³⁹ Ibid., February 25-March 2, 1878.

Again this season Mrs. Drew brought opera companies to her theatre, the Aimee Opera Bouffe Company and the Hess' English Opera Company.⁴⁰

The actress-manager played Lady Teazle in her theatre again this season, but no details about the company or production were found. Doubtless her company was one that she acquired for the occasion.⁴¹

Mrs. Drew volunteered her services at several interesting benefits this season. She appeared at one given to Mrs. E. L. Davenport by the ladies of Philadelphia. At this special matinee for the widow of the well-known actor, Miss Fanny Davenport played the leading role in The Lady of Lyons. Mrs. Drew, Miss Lillie Glover, Miss May Davenport, Eben Plympton, and W. E. Sheridan also appeared.⁴²

In October, Mrs. Drew went to New York to appear in a benefit for another actor's widow, Mrs. Edwin Adams. The committee in charge of this benefit included Sothern, Florence, McCullough, Booth, and William Winter. A parade of stars volunteered including Tony Pastor, John Gilbert, Rose Coghlan, Aimee, Clara Morris, McKee Rankin, E. M.

⁴⁰ Ibid., (Aimee) November 5-17, (Hess) November 19-25, 1877, March 11-18, 1878.

⁴¹ Ibid., February 4-9, 1878.

⁴² Ibid., April 3, 1878.

Holland, Mrs. John Sefton, Josephine Baker, J. C. Williamson, Maggie Moore. The great sensation of the day, according to Odell, was a presentation of the third act of Othello with Sothern as the Moor, Florence as Iago, Henry Crisp as Cassio, Lotta as Desdemona, and Mrs. John Drew as Emilia. This seems a strange selection for a group of comedians. Imitations, minstrel acts, and other offerings made up the remainder of the program. It was reported that Mrs. Adams netted \$9,381 from the benefit, largely through private gifts from friends of her husband.⁴³

Although Mrs. Drew brought a variety of entertainment to her audiences, including several of the best-known players of the day, she probably did not have a good season financially. There was a general business depression during the year 1878, and again places of amusement were affected. The Arch Street Theatre was the first important house in Philadelphia to cut the price of tickets. Beginning January 16, reserved orchestra seats could be secured for \$1.00, and all other seats except the gallery, for fifty cents.⁴⁴

⁴³ Odell, X, 435.

⁴⁴ Thomas F. Marshall, "A History of the Philadelphia Theatre, 1878-90." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1941, p. 5. Marshall lists all the plays produced in Philadelphia during the years covered by this study.

Before the end of the season, the oldest member of the present-day Barrymore family was born.⁴⁵

Three pre-season presentations, Emerson's Minstrels, Sol Smith Russell and the Berger Family, and Eliza Weatherby's Frolics, preceded the opening of the 1878-79 season.⁴⁶

There was one major change in the staff of the theatre this season. Mrs. Drew's son-in-law, Charles A. Mendum,⁴⁷ became the business manager in March, succeeding Charles R. Gardner. The Bulletin, in making the announcement, expressed the opinion that the choice of a new manager was a wise one. How much authority Mrs. Drew delegated to her manager, this writer has not been able to determine. From later developments, it seems that he must have had charge of placing the newspaper advertisements for the company, for the character of them changed

⁴⁵ Lionel Barrymore was born in Philadelphia April 12, 1878. He made his debut on the stage with his grandmother's touring company during 1893-94, but was more interested in scene painting than acting. Some years later he gained distinction for his stage and motion picture work. He is also a composer and etcher.

⁴⁶ The Bulletin, September 2-14, 1878.

⁴⁷ Mendum was married to Louisa, Mrs. Drew's oldest daughter. His background and qualifications for this position are not known to this writer. After leaving Mrs. Drew's employ several years later, he became Miss Anna Dickinson's manager. Later he managed a theatre in Boston.

after Mendum took over the management.⁴⁸ Mendum also had the responsibility of booking various attractions into the theatre. This was subject to Mrs. Drew's final approval, and her failure to approve a season's bookings was one of the factors leading to the difficulties between manager and lessee a few years hence. The change in the advertisements, and the fact that Mrs. Drew was given a "Grand Testimonial Benefit" at the end of the season might suggest that she retired from active management at the end of this season, but the evidence is not conclusive. Marshall is of the opinion that Mrs. Drew had given up the active management of the Arch by 1878, for, in discussing the status of the theatres in Philadelphia for the beginning of that year, he wrote:

It should be remembered that Mrs. John Drew's Arch Street Theatre no longer supported a permanent company, having gone over completely to the combination system after her retirement from active management.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ The Bulletin, March 24, 1879, announced Mendum's appointment. Beginning April 1, the newspaper advertisements read "Arch Street Theatre" instead of "Mrs. John Drew's Arch Street Theatre." Mrs. Drew was named as the lessee and Mendum as the manager. The advertisements were of a different character. They were larger in size, and some of the type used was bold-faced so that the Arch Street Theatre advertisement was easily distinguished in the columns of theatrical advertisements.

⁴⁹ Marshall, p. 2.

Perhaps he was of the opinion that she retired when she gave up the resident stock company in 1876. However, her theatre does not seem to have gone from the resident stock company system to the so-called combination house immediately. For a time, she seems to have assembled companies to support stars who did not have companies and also to support herself when she wished to appear. There seemed to be a period of transition.

The season must have been a satisfying one for the patrons of the theatre. Madame Modjeska made a return engagement and was seen in Camille, Adrienne, the Actress, Masks and Faces, and Romeo and Juliet.⁵⁰ The Bulletin on September 23 remarked that her portrayal of Peg Woffington was "not as good as she was capable of giving" and that her support was "simply wretched." The newspaper did not indicate whether the company was her own, or whether it was one assembled to support her.

Clara Morris made her first appearance at the Arch Street Theatre in Miss Multon. Some of Miss Morris' comments concerning Mrs. Drew's management of the theatre and her general reputation as a manager have already been cited. Miss Morris, in the same article, described an interview she had with Mrs. Drew during this first

⁵⁰ The Bulletin, September 16-28, 1878.

engagement, which gives some insight into Mrs. Drew as a person and also points out some of her executive qualities. Miss Morris wrote the article following a visit with Miss Ellen Terry. The English actress' visit recalled an earlier dressing room visitation, the one of Mrs. Drew:

So, sitting, there, [waiting for Miss Terry] I felt again the burning of my cheek, the startled throbbing of my heart, the surprise, the pleasure that had come to me, when that honored actress-manager and woman, in her own theatre, made her courteous, kindly call upon the stranger within her gates. I was playing my first starring engagement with her, and my trembling doubt as to her approval of my method of work must have been quite plain to her, for the loosening fingers tightened again about mine and she even gave the back of my hand a little friendly, jeweled tap as she said,

"All goes well--very well indeed, and you will sweep all before you by and by. Ah, you have heard I am not an admirer of the new lazy, stroll-about school of so-called repression. It is empty, wearisome, but I have acted ever since I wore pantalettes, and I know my business well enough to show you where your success comes from. You show the public by a glimpse or two you have great power--then you repress it, hold it in leash, and that thrills. You comprehend my meaning, do you not? It is because you have the powers to storm that your quietude frightens.

Miss Morris said that she thanked Mrs. Drew, and then commented that she had not seen the actress-manager in her box. The latter replied: "I was not there, but I have a 'coign of vantage' from which I get a better view, and--er-- well, 'put money in thy purse, Cassio,' I have sold the box for tonight." Then Miss Morris continued:

Ah, the good old-time quotation! The tears sprang to my eyes even as laughter broke from my lips. All my awed timidity had fallen away from me. I told her how pleasant was the sound of the old familiar

lines to my starved ears--how they recalled my ballet-girl days when all the stars used to tell great tales of the wonderful management of Mrs. John Drew's theatre; and how one actor had admirably said of her production of his plays: "There's no 'to be or not to be'--no 'in the alarm of fear caught up' about her. You make your needs known, and 'the Duchess' comes right to Hecuba, and grants them every one."

"Oh," said Mrs. Drew--her eyes lighted and a faint smile touched her serious lips--"he exaggerated a trifle both in quotation and praise, yet"--she was speaking simply, naturally--"in matters of business I always have that feeling 'if it were done, then it were well it were done quickly!' you know."

The older actress' dignity made a very strong impression upon the younger actress, and she wrote:

My imagination is fairly active, but it is not vigorous enough to present me a picture of Mrs. John Drew with disturbed, even relaxed, dignity of port or manner under any circumstances. She was the sort of woman to appear at an early morning fire, buttoning something securely and properly about her, while saying with calm authority to the fireman: "Hook your ladder to the other window, please. No--this is no time for explanations, my man. Hook on to the other window, as I tell you, and then we will descend." So much was her dignity a part of her very self--not a mere assumption. I have no doubt that in those far-away days of pantalettes, she wore their starched white glory of ruffle and tuck with greater dignity than that assumed by her actress-mother in her queen's robes. What a handsome, masterful young creature she must have been in the days when she was acting the dashing Lady Gay, the tormenting Lady Teazle and all that swarm of arrant coquettes. Her high features, her air of gentle breeding, the touch of hauteur in her manner must have given the same zest to the admiration of her lovers that the faint nip of the frost in the autumn gives to the torpid blood. . . .

Perhaps this strict manageress and famed actress may like other women, have had her brief uncorseted hour of ease late at night, when she brushed her back hair and held light conversation with her venerable mother

or the young and brilliant daughter, Georgia [sic]-- who paid her the compliment of a strong personal resemblance--perhaps, but the imagination balks when asked to so picture her.

Miss Morris gave this description of Mrs. Drew's leave-taking, and offered the following final comment:

Mrs. John Drew, in black silk with some most precious lace about her shoulders, and a small velvet affair, not unlike a coronet, upon her frosting hair, took a stately leave of me, as if she had been parting in a crowded drawing room, and I felt truly honored by her courteous attention--for this grand manner was not affectation, was not pose; it was Mrs. John Drew.⁵¹

If this interview took place this season, as Miss Morris suggested, Mrs. Drew seems to have made it in her capacity as manager. Miss Morris finished her engagement with a matinee performance, and on the evening of October 5, Mrs. Drew was seen in Nine Points of the Law. According to Marshall, Mrs. Drew's niece, Miss Adine Stephens, the daughter of Georgiana Kinlock Stephens, made her debut.⁵² The Bulletin advertisements for this date noted the fact that Mrs. Drew was to appear but made no mention of Miss Stephens. The Ledger also did not mention her appearance, so she must not have received the attention that Mrs. Drew's children, John and Georgie, received at their debuts.⁵³

⁵¹ Morris, pp. 208, 210.

⁵² Marshall, pp. 17, 170.

⁵³ The Public Ledger and The Bulletin, October 1-6, 1878.

Many of the players that appeared were making return engagements, some few were new. It probably came as no surprise to the Arch Street patrons to note the return of Oliver Doud Byron, and it was probably no surprise, either, that he appeared in Ben McCullough, Donald McKay, and Across the Continent. Fanny Davenport also returned, and among other pieces, gave the first Philadelphia presentation of the play, Divorce. The Two Orphans was again Kate Claxton's vehicle. McKee Rankin and Kitty Blanchard were seen in The Danites, and Stuart Robson and W. H. Crane acted The Comedy of Errors which Robson had played at the Arch some years before. Frank Mayo was seen in The Streets of New York and Davy Crockett, and J. K. Emmet in another Fritz play.⁵⁴ It is not known whether all these players brought their own supporting companies, or whether some were supplied in Philadelphia.

Milton Nobles, apparently new to the patrons of this theatre, appeared in The Phoenix, Denman Thompson and Company played in Joshua Whitcomb, Alice Oates, comedienne, appeared in Le Petit Duc, and Mr. and Mrs. George S. Knight (Sophie Worrell) in Girofle-Girofla and other musical pieces.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ The Bulletin, (Byron) October 7-12, (Davenport) September 16-28, (Claxton) November 18-23, 1878, (Rankin) January 6-11, (Robson) January 13-18, (Mayo) February 3-15, (Emmet) April 14-26, 1879.

⁵⁵ Ibid., (Nobles) November 25-30, (Thompson) December 9-21, 1878, (Oates) March 10-22, (Knoght) March 24-April 5, 1879.

Several combinations also appeared as the Warde-Barrymore Combination in Diplomacy, the Broadway Comedy Company in The Lower Million, H. E. Abbey's Park Company in Hurricane and Old Love Letters, Rice's Burlesque Company in a number of offerings including Babes in the Woods, Haverly's United Mastodon Minstrels, and the Lyceum Company in Gilbert and Sullivan operettas.⁵⁶

February 22, was a notable day because it marked the first appearance of Mrs. Drew in a role in which she was to become famous, that of Mrs. Malaprop. Mrs. Drew appeared in Sheridan's famous play at a "Grand Complimentary Benefit" given in her honor.⁵⁷ Barton Hill appeared as Captain Absolute and Georgie Drew was Julia. It is not known why Mrs. Drew was given such a benefit at this time, unless it marked her retirement from active management. However, the change in business managers did not take place until a month later.

The week of May 19 through May 24 was given over to a revival of old comedies. Among the actors engaged was Otis Skinner, who had played during the regular season at the Walnut Street Theatre. Skinner said later that

⁵⁶ Ibid., (Warde-Barrymore) October 14-26, (Broadway) October 28-November 2, (Abbey) December 2-7, (Rice) December 23, 1878-January 4-, 1879, April 7-12, April 28-May 17, (Haverly's) January 20-February 1, (Lyceum) February 17-March 8, 1879.

⁵⁷ A portion of a program for Mrs. John Drew's Arch Street Theatre dated February 22, 1879, is in the Collection of Programs and Playbills marked "Wilmington" at the Free Library of Philadelphia. It gives the cast for this play.

some engagements, the most important of which was the week of old comedy at Mrs. Drew's, kept him in Philadelphia after the close of the season. Skinner gave this description of the engagement:

For years Mrs. Drew had managed the gradually declining fortunes of the Arch with wisdom and stern discipline. She was a woman of overawing dignity, crammed with the traditions of her art, capable in stage direction, and the accredited and brilliant possessor, for a generation of the parts of the heroines in the Sheridan, Coleman ^{/sic/}, Goldsmith, and Farquhar comedies of manner. The annual revival of these pieces was looked upon as an event of each Philadelphia season. Her selection of 1879 consisted of THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL, THE JEALOUS WIFE, PAUL PRY, WIVES AS THEY WERE AND MAIDS AS THEY ARE, THE GOLDEN FARMER, and TO OBLIGE HENSON. I was in all of them, six walking gentlemen to play in six nights, and I loathed the "pretty parts." By Saturday my mind was so chaotic that all the characters were rattling about within it simultaneously.

The prospect of the week's work had so appalled the leading man that he disappeared after the first performance. His place was filled by a new leading man for each night, the most strenuous work falling upon the shoulders of John Drew. He arrived in town at four o'clock in the morning of Wednesday, returning from a long and disastrous tour of DIPLOMACY. He was met at the door of his home by his mother--playbook in one hand, candle in the other. She put the prompt book in his hand and said: "Don't go to bed, John. You play this to-night." John didn't go to bed, and that evening he spoke every line of Mr. Bronzely in Mrs. Inchbald's WIVES AS THEY WERE, a part longer than the moral Law. Mrs. Drew's daughter, Georgie, who afterward as Mrs. Maurice Barrymore won a reputation as the best comedienne and the wittiest woman on the American stage, played Maria to her mother's Lady Teazle during the week.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Otis Skinner, Footlights and Spotlights, Recollections of My Life on the Stage (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, c. 1924), p. 78. His daughter, Cornelia Otis Skinner, recounts the same story in her book, Family Circle (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1948), p. 71.

In relating the story, John Drew said that he arrived at two o'clock instead of four and that he stayed up all night and studied and attended rehearsal at ten o'clock the next morning. He said that his performance was neither spirited nor good but he did know his lines.⁵⁹

By the end of this season, the Arch was fully established as a combination theatre, all entertainment being provided by visiting groups, except for an occasional appearance of Mrs. Drew with a company she assembled to support her in a particular play or group of plays. Many years later, in an interview, the actress-manager discussed her years of management and the change from one system to another:

I had a stock company for thirty-one years. I became lessee of the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia in 1861, and held it until 1892. For the first twenty years⁶⁰ I had a stock company composed of John Gilbert, Frank Drew, Barton Hill, Louis James, F. F. Mackay, McKee Rankin and others, and we presented nearly all the new plays as they came out. Ah, those were the halcyon days of stock companies. No sooner was a play brought out in New York than the companies in other cities could obtain a right to perform them by paying so much a night. We made plenty of money then, each actor had a salary drawn regularly, and you did not depend upon an engagement for the run of a play. It was a good method, that old way of stock companies, and there was something peculiarly gratifying to actors and actresses in the thought that they were able to hold the same audiences continually,

⁵⁹ Drew, My Years on the Stage, pp. 68, 69.

⁶⁰ If this were true, she must have had a stock company until the close of the 1880-1881 season, but there is no evidence that she had a permanent resident company after the close of the 1875-76 season. That was fifteen years, not twenty.

from year to year, and no one grew tired or restless, as in these days, when novelty in actors and actresses is the cry. But the old ways did not please modern evolution, and the New York managers began to send their own companies on the road, in the combination system, they would not sell the right to use their novelties to other cities, and so the smaller stock companies were left out in the cold--their death knell was sounded. But it is a singular coincidence that the decline of large audiences began with the new system and there is a great deal to be said for and against it. In the first place, the stock company of the old days was a splendid feature of the large cities, each producing the same novelty simultaneously, and people did not have to wait till the traveling combination came. Another thing, it afforded great opportunities for the actors to grow wide and broad and deep, versatile, etc. An actor, if he had any capacity, was expected to play the part called upon by the manager. Now that is all changed. The old school of versatile talent has become a school of parts. On the other hand the combination affords great benefit for the small towns the provinces, I would call them, for the people have the advantage of seeing the newest plays presented as in New York or Philadelphia, and by the same actors, with the same stage accessories.⁶¹

An event of some theatrical importance took place during the summer of 1879. A daughter was born to Georgie Drew and Maurice Barrymore, and the Kinlock-Drew theatre dynasty was continued.⁶²

⁶¹ The Daily Picayune, March 27, 1894.

⁶² Ethel Barrymore was born August 15, 1879 in Philadelphia. She played in several plays with her uncle, John Drew, and in 1897, went to England to appear with Sir Henry Irving. Her first great success in this country was in Charles Frohman's Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines. Miss Barrymore played many stage roles with distinction and became a successful screen actress. Her three children, Ethel Barrymore Colt, John Drew Colt, and Samuel Pomeroy Colt have made stage appearances.

CHAPTER XI

ACTRESS-MANAGER, COMBINATION THEATRE (1879-1892)

The combination system was well established at the Arch Street Theatre at the beginning of the 1879-80 season, and the remaining thirteen seasons of Mrs. Drew's management will not be covered in as great detail. One writer has suggested that Mrs. Drew's once famous theatre had no history after the combination system was well established.¹ This statement is not necessarily true, because some fine entertainers made appearances on the Arch Street Theatre stage, particularly during the early part of the period, and Mrs. Drew herself appeared nearly every season. The period is of interest, too, because of the changes in theatrical production brought about by the new system. It likewise completes the picture of a theatre that operated under several systems.

Marshall's study previously cited contains a daybook which lists the names of all the plays produced in the Quaker city between January 1, 1878 and January 1, 1891. In the thesis proper, he has noted the names of the leading

¹ /Seilhamer/ "Mrs. Drew as Manager," The Times-Philadelphia, May 15, 1897.

players to appear at a theatre in a given year. He makes no effort to list all the players or combinations to appear, and there seems no good reason for doing so, since many of them were of minor importance.

This chapter will consider the kinds of productions seen in the theatre, Mrs. Drew's acting appearances, the engagements of any well-known players, and any events which affected the conduct of the business of the theatre. Likewise, events of biographical importance as far as the life of the actress-manager is concerned, will continue to be mentioned.

The 1879-80 season, which opened September 1 and closed June 7 with a complimentary testimonial benefit for Mrs. Drew, brought ten new plays to the boards of the Arch Street theatre. Included on the bills were operas, operettas, comedies, tragedies, melodramas, and some novelty entertainments.² There were no minstrel shows during the regular season, and Marshall reported that in 1880, the leading theatres did not have "to depend upon minstrels to fill up a gap in their schedules and pocketbooks." He said that this was "a sure sign that theatrical business had improved."³

Among the players to appear were James A. Hearne

² Marshall, pp. 181, 182, 192.

³ Ibid., p. 40.

and his wife, Katherine Corcoran, in Hearts of Oak, Daniel Bandmann in Narcisse and several Shakespearean plays, Agnes Booth in Fairfax, Robson and Crane in Our Bachelors and The Comedy of Errors, Mrs. D. P. Bowers in Court and Stage, the Florences in The Mighty Dollar, Joseph Murphy in Kerry Gow, Maggie Mitchell in Fanchon, Little Barefoot and other pieces, William Gillette in The Professor. Two former stock company players (in addition to Robson) returned as stars. They were Miss Annie Graham in Upper Crust and F. F. Mackay in Our Daughters.⁴

After the regular season closed at the Arch, a complimentary testimonial benefit was given for Mrs. Drew. In making the announcement the Bulletin remarked that the "endeavors of this estimable lady to afford pleasure and profitable amusements for the people of Philadelphia are highly appreciated," and predicted a brilliant ovation for her. Included in the variety of entertainment offered, was Mrs. Drew's appearance in The Jealous Wife. Otis Skinner must have been in Philadelphia again, for he was a member of the cast. Other cast members included Georgie Drew, Adine Stephens, George Hoey, and W. H. Wallis.⁵

The Bulletin for May 31, in an article in "The Theatres" column, announced more than a dozen attractions for the

⁴ Ibid., pp. 181, 182, 192.

⁵ The Bulletin, June 7, 1880.

next season had been booked by Manager Mendum. The article also stated that the present season had been the most successful in three years, and suggested that from the list of attractions already scheduled, the next season promised to be even more prosperous. The article also said that the theatre would be newly decorated and completely recarpeted during the summer.

Ten new plays were brought to the theatre during the 1880-81 season, which opened September 6 and closed May 9. Operas, comic operas, tragedies, comedies, and melodramas appeared during the season. Among the players seen were Tommaso Salvini in Othello, Hamlet, and several other plays, Chanfrau in Kit, the McKee Rankins in The Danites, DeWolf Hopper in 100 Wives, Robson and Crane in Sharps and Flats, John T. Raymond in Fresh, the American, M. B. Curtis in Sam'l of Posen, and Maggie Mitchell in Little Barefoot and other pieces.⁶

The most significant event of the season, however, was the appearance of Joseph Jefferson and Mrs. Drew in a revival of a play that was so successful that they toured the country in it for twelve years. The play was Sheridan's The Rivals. The play had been cut to three acts, the role of Falkland reduced and that of Julia excised. This version doubtless pleased many people who thought that the sequences

⁶ Marshall, pp. 41, 43, 192, 193, 204.

involving Julia were something of a bore anyway, but it shocked some oldsters in the theatre. William Warren, for example, was said to have remarked that it reminded him of a line from a poem by Buchanan Reed, "And Sheridan twenty miles away." John Gilbert remarked that it was sacrilegious and that it would serve Jefferson right if the shade of Sheridan haunted him.⁷

Jefferson was seen in the role of Bob Acres, but probably few Philadelphians remembered his first appearance in their city in the role at John Drew's National Theatre in 1857. At that time, Mrs. Drew was Lydia Languish. This season, she was seen in the role which she had played for the first time the previous season, that of Mrs. Malaprop.

Jefferson told of some new business which Mrs. Drew introduced in the role:

During our first rehearsal of the comedy in Philadelphia, Mrs. John Drew, who had evidently been considering the part of Mrs. Malaprop with great care, introduced some novel business in her first scene with Captain Absolute that struck me as one of the finest points I had ever seen made. When Mrs. Malaprop hands the letter for the Captain to read, by accident she gives him her own love-letter lately received by her from Sir Lucius O'Trigger. As the Captain reads the first line, which betrays the secret, Mrs. Drew starts, blushes, and simperingly explains that "there is a slight mistake." Her manner during this situation was the perfection of comedy. She asked if I thought that the introduction was admissible, but I replied that I not only thought it was admissible, but Sheridan himself would have introduced it if the idea had happened to

⁷ Jefferson, pp. 401, 402.

occur to him.⁸

This interpolation seems not to have caused any consternation among the critics. Indeed, the ones who mentioned it praised it. In fact, Mrs. Drew's recreation of the role seems never to have been questioned, although there were persons who thought that Jefferson's Bob Acres was not the character that Sheridan created and were not hesitant about expressing their feelings in this connection.⁹

The supporting company at the Arch Street Theatre included Frederick Robinson, Maurice Barrymore, Charles Waverly, Henry F. Taylor, Thomas Jefferson (son to Joseph Jefferson), James Galloway, Rosa Rand, and Adine Stephens. The play was very well received and was given twenty-two times. The Bulletin on September 14 had this to say of the production:

That good artists in a good standard play are appreciated even in these so-called degenerate days of the drama, was proved last night at the Arch Street Theatre, which was packed full with an audience largely composed of the most refined intellectual men and women of Philadelphia. All or nearly all had seen it before, and some had seen Mrs. Jefferson as Bob Acres and Mrs. John Drew as Mrs. Malaprop. The appearance of these two really great artists together was, however, a novelty, and the vast assemblage that braved a heavy rain storm to witness the performance were richly rewarded. . . .

On September 30, the same newspaper reported that Jefferson and the excellent company were playing to crowded

⁸ Ibid., 400, 401.

⁹ Odell, XI, 435.

houses.

This engagement was the beginning of a long association of the two comedians in Sheridan's play. Until the end of the 1891-92 season, Jefferson and Mrs. Drew toured in the play several weeks each year and visited every important theatre city in the country. It is not possible to trace the travels of the Jefferson Company during the seasons that Mrs. Drew traveled with them because of the limitations of this study, but reviews of Philadelphia and New York appearances will be cited to show Mrs. Malaprop's reception in those cities as the years went by.

Jefferson and Mrs. Drew, with the same company, played The Rivals at the Brooklyn Park Theatre January 24, 25, and 26.¹⁰

Mrs. Drew was back at her theatre for the last week of the season and "presented an interesting and impressive characterization of a scandalized wife and heartbroken mother" in a new play called Back from the Grave.¹¹

On the last night of the season, a complimentary benefit was extended to Charles A. Mendum. This was the first time he had been so honored at the Arch Street Theatre. It was also the last time since it was his last full season in his mother-in-law's theatre. According to a playbill, a scene

¹⁰ Ibid., XI, 385.

¹¹ The Bulletin, May 3, 1881.

from The School for Scandal was presented with John Gallagher and Fred G. Maeder in the cast. (Maeder was the stage director this season.) The play Caste was also given with Mrs. Drew, Mrs. Clara Fisher Maeder, John Drew, Sam Hemple, and others in the cast. Mendum was Dixon, "his first and last appearance on any stage in a most unimportant role" according to the playbill.¹² In announcing the benefit, the Bulletin praised Mendum for his management of the house:

. . . His happy method of catering to the public taste for high class entertainments, his careful attention to business and his courteous treatment of the patrons of Mrs. Drew's theatre have won for him a great army of friends and admirers, who will see to it that he has a full house.¹³

On May 9, the day of the benefit, the same newspaper remarked:

One of the most successful seasons at the Arch Street Theatre closes tonight with the benefit of the very successful young manager, Mr. Charles A. Mendum. He has been judicious and indefatigable in providing attractive entertainments for the patrons of the Arch, and now that his work is done, and has been done well, he should be liberally rewarded for his efforts to please.¹⁴

One assumes that Mrs. Drew and her son-in-law manager were on friendly terms, inasmuch as she appeared at his benefit, yet early the next season she dispensed with his

¹² Small playbill dated May 9, 1881, Collection of Programs and Playbills, Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia, Penna.

¹³ The Bulletin, May 2, 1881.

¹⁴ Ibid., May 9, 1881.

services. Comments in regard to the success of the season are interesting in view of the fact that the next season the management asked the stockholders for a reduction in rent. Even though this season may have been a success as far as stage presentations were concerned, it cannot have been an outstanding financial success.

The 1881-82 season at the Arch Street Theatre, which began on September 5 and closed on May 20, brought seven new plays to Philadelphia. The programs this season consisted of operas, comedies, melodramas, minstrel shows, and a magician. Among the players who appeared were: Nat C. Goodwin in a new play, The Member from Slocum, Agnes Booth and George Holland in After the Opera, Boucicault in Suila-Nor, or Life in Galway, also a new play. The Rankins, DeWolf Hopper, and Chanfrau also were seen this season.¹⁵ Probably the most interesting production was Steele Mackaye's A Fool's Errand, which was given in October. On October 21, the Inquirer announced that the house would be closed on Monday and Tuesday for rehearsals of the new play. As far as this writer knows, this was the first time that Mrs. Drew's house was ever closed for a rehearsal. The same newspaper remarked that Maeder, the stage director, had been busy for some time getting ready for the production. The Inquirer

¹⁵ Marshall, pp. 204, 214.

considered Mendum fortunate in being able to bring the play to Philadelphia.¹⁶

Even though Mendum was praised for bringing a particular attraction to the theatre, Mrs. Drew seems not to have been too well pleased with his managerial efforts. The cause or causes of her dissatisfaction are not clear, although it seems that she did not approve his booking arrangements for the season. It may also be true that she was not happy about his policies which were tending to making the people forget that she was the lessee of the theatre. There may also have been business arrangements between the two that caused difficulty as Mendum suggested.¹⁷ The strained relations between lessee and manager culminated in a letter from Mendum which appeared in the Inquirer of October 31:

Arch Street Theatre
October 29--

Dear Sir

Differences of opinion having arisen between myself and Mrs. Drew respecting conduct of the business of the Arch Street Theatre, out of which a suit of law has been commenced by me, has necessitated my retirement from the management.

Allow me to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the press and the public of Philadelphia for the very generous treatment which has always been accorded me.

Yours, very truly, [sic]

Charles A. Mendum

¹⁶ The Inquirer, October 21, 1881.

¹⁷ Ibid., October 31, 1881.

Apparently Mendum talked over his difficulties with a reporter from this newspaper, and a news item appeared with the letter:

It is understood that the yearly contracts between Mr. Mendum and Mrs. Drew for two years past have called for a salary and a percentage of the net earnings although this percentage has never been paid. When the contract for this year was drawn, however, there was no mention made of a percentage. During the summer Mr. Mendum made arrangements with over twenty troupes for engagements during the season. Several weeks ago this list was submitted to Mrs. Drew for her approval, but was returned without comment or any suggestion and quite recently, when Mr. Mendum requested formal acknowledgment of his engagement for the present season, in reply Mrs. Drew forwarded a notification that his services as manager would not be required after to-day. Mr. Mendum has consulted Furman, Esq., in reference to a claim against Mrs. Drew for damages, and it is probable that the suit will be instituted on Monday. Mrs. Drew will manage the Arch herself.

Mr. Mendum, whose courtesy and energy combined to secure for him a large circle of friends, and have rendered his connection with the Arch Street Theatre a valuable one, will for the present devote all his time to managing the interests of Miss Anna Dickinson, for whom he is now arranging a tour and organizing a company.

This writer found no record that Mendum ever brought suit,¹⁸ although Marshall, who did not document his information,

¹⁸ A search of the Inquirer and the Bulletin for the remainder of the year failed to bring to light any information about the suit. Also, there is no record of the suit in Vale Pennsylvania Digest, 1682 to date /1950/ Covering Pennsylvania Supreme and Superior Court Records and All Other Courts of Record and Atlantic Reporter As Well As Pennsylvania Cases Decided in Supreme Court of the United States and U. S. Court of Appeals and Federal Circuit and District Courts. Vols. 44, 44a (St. Paul, Minn. West Pub. Co., c. 1950), or in The Legal Intelligencer for the Year /1881 and 1882/ Vol. XXXVIII, and XXXIX, conducted by Ballas Sanders and Henry C. Titus, Esqs. (Philadelphia: J. M. Power Wallace, 1881, 1882).

stated that he did and lost the suit.¹⁹

A news item in the November 1 Inquirer noted that Mrs. Drew, who had been on tour with the Jefferson Company, would arrive home the following week, due to the fact that Jefferson was committed to play Rip Van Winkle for some of the company's engagements and she did not appear in this play. The item also stated: "A list of coming attractions will shortly be issued, in the shape of a bulletin, proving that the Arch Street Theatre is determined to keep its old popular place." In August, Mendum had released a list of attractions already booked for the season,²⁰ apparently before he had secured Mrs. Drew's approval. A comparison of the list of combinations that appeared with Mendum's August announcement shows that most of them appeared during the season, although some few seem to have been canceled.

Not only did Mrs. Drew have managerial difficulties this season, she had an unpleasant incident with her stockholders. On November 19, the Inquirer printed an account of a court proceeding involving Mrs. Drew and the stockholders of the Arch Street Theatre:

F. M. Riter, Thomas J. Diehl and R. C. McMurtrie, Esqs., made a valiant struggle yesterday to convince Judges Allison, Peirce [sic] and Biddle in Court of Common Pleas, No. 1, that E. Hann Hanson, Esq., the master appointed by

¹⁹ Marshall, p. 49.

²⁰ The Inquirer, August 29, 1881.

the court to investigate the complaint of the thirteen stockholders of the Arch Street Theatre, relative to the management of that concern, had made an erroneous decision in his recent report filed in court. Mr. Hanson had decided that of a remission of \$3000 rent by the stockholders to Mrs. Drew, the lessee, \$292 should be paid to the thirteen complainants because they had not acquiesced in it and were not bound by it, even if the large majority of the stockholders were willing to make the reduction in rent.

It was also decided by the master that the third row of seats should be restored to the stockholders, as had been customary prior to 1876, and that it was the duty of the Board of Managers to advertise in theatrical papers in the principal cities of the country for proposals for the leasing of the theatre before the next meeting of the stockholders in February 1882.

It was said that Mrs. Drew gave ample consideration for this remission in rent, in fact that she had transferred to the theatre certain scenery and other property which had cost some \$20,000, and that the reason the third row of seats were not given to the stockholders was because they had rarely used them, and the managers thought it best to sell the seats for the general interest of the theatre, a thing that was entirely within their discretion, John G. Johnson, Esq., counsel for the complainants, argued that the master's conclusions were correct as to facts, and just as to law. The court held the matter under advisement.

On December 5, 1881, the same newspaper carried an account of the decision. The headlines for the story read: "A Groundless Complaint. The Court Vindicates Mrs. Drew and the Board of Agents of the Arch Street Theatre." A statement of the bill of complaint was included in the story:

Judge Peirce in Court of Common Pleas, No. 1, on Saturday delivered the decision of the Court upon the exceptions which had been taken by the defendants to the report of the master appointed by the Court to investigate the charges of certain of the stockholders of the Arch Street Theatre, as presented in a bill in equity filed by them. The bill charged that the Board of Agents, who managed the theatre for the stockholders have been influenced by interest and favoritism in leasing the

theatre, by reason of which it has been let at a much lower rent than it otherwise would have brought, that the defendant, Michael M. Riter, had been pecuniarily interested with Mrs. Drew in the management of the theatre, in fraud of the stockholders, for whom he was the agent; that the Board of Agents had never fully accounted to the stockholders for all the rents collected by them, and that they had made donations to Mrs. Drew out of the rents collected; or which ought to have been collected from her, to the amount of \$9600, and that the stockholders were deprived of the third row of seats which they had enjoyed for nearly fifteen years.

The newspaper then cited the report of the master, which has previously been quoted, and told about the disposition of the case:

After reciting all these facts Judge Peirce discusses the law under which the master's conclusions were reached, and shows in succession the impropriety of the various decrees advised by that gentleman. In the final paragraph of the opinion he gives the complaining stockholders the following rap:

"We cannot too strongly condemn the practice which prevails to an unwarranted extent in legal and equitable proceedings of the charging parties to the proceedings with unlawful combinations and frauds, the proofs of which, as in this case, utterly failed. Such charges should not be made until the parties making them have first clearly satisfied themselves that they can be maintained, and in the utter failure of such proofs the presumption is against the makers of them, that they wantonly defame the good names and reputations of their fellow men. The exceptions are sustained, and the bill is dismissed with costs."

Apparently then the presiding judge did not think there was any basis for the charges of discrimination, or for the other charges brought by disgruntled stockholders.

In his study, Marshall made the following statement:

Although there were charges of discrimination apparently well founded, Mrs. Drew still contrived to hold the lease at \$7,500 a year, a low rental, considering the calibre

of the house.²¹

If Marshall had reference to this case, he apparently did not know the judge's decision.

The third court case was a suit for damages brought by Fusey A. Peer and his wife Rachel for injuries which Mrs. Peer allegedly received while being forcibly ejected from the Arch Street Theatre, April 16, 1874. This was apparently the second suit to be filed by the Peers, who were Negroes. The first was filed by Peer for loss of his wife's services in domestic affairs and the consequent outlay necessarily incurred in hiring others to do what she would have done and for procuring medical attendance. Peer was awarded \$900 in damages by a lower court. Mrs. Drew appealed the decision and the case reached the Pennsylvania State Supreme Court in 1880. Mrs. Drew denied that the Peers presented tickets for admission, which was for the police centennial performances previously reported in this study, and contended that if they had presented tickets on this occasion, it would have been a physical impossibility for theatre employees to eject them because of the crowd on the night in question. Mrs. Drew further contended that she had not given orders to refuse the ticket-holders admission, and that she was not responsible for the action of her employees. Mrs. Drew

²¹ Marshall, p. 36. Marshall made this statement while discussing the 1880 season.

claimed to be liable only for the refund of the purchase price of the tickets. Apparently the court felt that the Peers had been forcibly ejected, that Mrs. Drew was responsible for her employees who acted as her agents, that a reserved seat constitutes a lease in effect, and that the Peers had the right to be seated regardless of race since the theatre had no clearly stated policy in regard to seating Negroes. There seems to have been also some question as to whether or not the husband should have filed suit for his wife's injuries, but the court was of the opinion that his action was proper.²²

The second suit was an attempt on the part of Mrs. Peer to collect damages for her injuries, and the disposition of this case is not known. It was not reported in the Vale Pennsylvania Digest, or The Legal Intelligencer for the Year 1881 and 1882. No account of the verdict seems to have been published in either the Bulletin or the Inquirer, and the last mention of the case was to the effect that the jury was out.²³ If the Peers were awarded the decision in the second case, Mrs. Drew must have complied with the terms without appealing it, for the case apparently did not reach a higher court.

²² The Legal Intelligencer for the Year 1880, XXXVII, 341, and 93 Pennsylvania State Reports, 234.

²³ The Inquirer, October 25, 1881.

Even though Mrs. Drew was troubled with managerial cares during this season, she must have been pleased with the receptions she received as an actress as a member of Jefferson's company. In December, 1881, The Rivals was brought back to the Arch, and one reviewer was of the opinion that Jefferson and Mrs. Drew had improved since their first appearance in the roles of Bob Acres and Mrs. Malaprop. He stated that they "added largely to the excellence of their earlier work and improved upon perfection."²⁴ Earlier in the season the two comedians appeared in Sheridan's play in New York. This was Jefferson's first presentation of the cut version of the play in that city although it had been played in Brooklyn the previous season. On this occasion, Odell said of Mrs. Drew's acting:

. . . Now Jefferson arranged for but two weeks of his revival, and he brought it out with the invaluable aid of Mrs. John Drew, a simply incomparable Mrs. Malaprop, better possibly than the performance of the same part by either Mrs. Wheatley or Mrs. Vernon, both of which she must have studied. She now came forward to be acclaimed for one of the finest comedy portrayals ever seen on any stage. The elegance, the finish of her art remain as precious heritages in memory and in stage history. . . .²⁵

A reviewer for a New York newspaper made the following interesting observation as to Mrs. Drew's acting of the role:

The reception given to Mrs. Drew last night, should be

²⁴ Ibid., December 12, 1881.

²⁵ Odell, XI, 435.

remembered here as one of the brightest incidents of a charming occasion. Her stately decorum and formidable severity, her grandiose pomp, the fervent sincerity of her blunders, the comic absurdity of her antiquated coquetry, the admirable accuracy and precision of her speech and business made her performance of Mrs. Malaprop simply perfection. There is a certain harshness in the part which Mrs. Drew brings out as no other actress in our time has done; it is the flavor of the crab-apple which no other fruit can give.²⁶

Mrs. Drew was at this time building the reputation for her interpretation of the role which was to remain for many years. Brander Matthews at a later date compared Mrs. Drew's acting of the role with that of Mrs. Sterling of the English stage:

Forty years ago and more there were two actresses, one in Great Britain and the other in the United States, who brought to the performance of old women the mastery of effect which they had acquired in the impersonation of leading ladies. Mrs. Sterling had been the original Peg Woffington in "Masks and Faces"; and Mrs. Drew had been accepted as one of the best of Lady Teazles. At almost the same time they appeared one in London and one in New York as Mrs. Malaprop. Both of them won the plaudits of the public, but by totally different methods. Both had authority; both were popular favorites, assured of a welcome in whatever they undertook; both knew all the traditions of Old Comedy; and there the resemblance ended.

Mrs. Sterling was a mistress of all the bolder devices for arousing laughter; she sought broad effects; she splashed on her color with an unsparing hand as tho [sic] she could not trust the intelligence of the spectators. I do not dare to be rude enough to hint that she clowned the part, yet I cannot find any other term to describe her method. In her hands Mrs. Malaprop was not a lady and not a finely drawn character; rather she was a caricature, intensely self-conscious of her verbal blunders. As the time came for one of them to be delivered,

²⁶ The New York Herald Tribune, September 13, 1881.

she visibly braced herself for effort, as tho saying to the audience, "I'm Mrs. Malaprop and here is another malapropism. It's a good one, I assure you. You really can't help laughing at it. Are you ready for it?" Then she hurled it at the spectators, waiting for the outburst of laughter, and smiling in comic complicity with them, as if assuring them that it was a good one, wasn't it?

When Mrs. Drew played Mrs. Malaprop she lifted the part from low comedy to high comedy. Sheridan's figure of fun ceased to be a caricature and became a deftly etched character, more human and more humorous. Mrs. Drew's Mrs. Malaprop was a woman educated beyond her intelligence and puffed with pride in her little learning. She was serenely unconscious that there was any such thing as malapropisms, and she delivered each of them with evident delight in her nice derangement of epitaphs, letting us share in her joy that she had hit upon exactly the right word, the only word, the word that she alone could provide. Every malapropism was a fresh invention of hers; she made us feel that it had just occurred to her; and thus she produced the illusion of spontaneity. She exhibited the perfected art which seemed like nature, because it was able to conceal its processes. As a result of this subtler reading of the lines and of this more accurate conception of the part, Mrs. Drew's Mrs. Malaprop was really more effective than Mrs. Sterling's. If I may trust my memory after more than two-score years, the laughter it evoked was both heartier and more abundant.²⁷

William Winter, distinguished theatre critic, in his biography of Jefferson, discussed at some length the difficulties of acting comedy effectively, and said: "It may not be so noble to act Don Felix as to act Hamlet; but, in art, it is more difficult to make a great effect with the former than with the latter." Winter was of the opinion that

²⁷ /James/ Brander Matthews, Rip Van Winkle Goes to the Play and Other Essays on Plays and Players (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), pp. 201, 202, 203.

Jefferson "expended rare intellectual force and exuberant humor upon the fabric of Acres, and in that respect, while giving much pleasure, taught a valuable lesson." As to the actress's portrayal of her role, Winter wrote:

Mrs. Drew treated in the same earnest spirit the character of Mrs. Malaprop. The dressing was appropriately rich, and in suitable taste; the manner decorous and stately, the personality formidable; the deportment elaborate and pretentious, as it should be; the delivery of the text exquisite in its accuracy and finish, and in its unconscious grace,--the word being always matched by the right mood, and not a single blunder, in what that eccentric character calls her "orthodoxy," made in any spirit but that of fervent conviction. Merely to hear her say, "He has enveloped the plot to me, and he will give you the perpendiculars," was to apprehend the character in a single sentence. Her illustrative stage business with the letter,--giving to Absolute, by mistake, one of the love-letters of O'Trigger, instead of the intercepted epistle of Beverley, and then hastily reclaiming it,--was done with a bridling simper and an antique blush that were irresistible. The pervasive excellence of the work was intense sincerity, and that redeemed the extravagance of the character and the farcical quality of its text. For the first time it seemed as if Mrs. Malaprop might exist. The part was finely acted in earlier days, by Mrs. Vernon; but Mrs. Drew made it rational.²⁸

The tours with Jefferson made it possible for more people to see Mrs. Drew's acting. For many years her work as an actress-manager had kept her rather closely confined to Philadelphia, and she had made few appearances outside that city. Theatregoers, then, had had an opportunity to

²⁸ William Winter, Life and Art of Joseph Jefferson, Together with Some Account of His Ancestry and the Jefferson Family of Actors (New York: Macmillan Co., 1894), pp. 221, 222.

forget Louisa Lane, child prodigy, and the versatile actress known at various times as Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. Mossop, and Mrs. Drew. The tours with Jefferson gave her an opportunity to renew her reputation in the cities in which she had appeared at an earlier time, and they gave her an opportunity to become known in other cities. Mrs. Drew was one of the few American players (Clara Fisher Maeder was another) to begin a career as a child actress and play all the positions open to an actress during her lifetime including that of a comic old woman.

Because of her success in the role of Mrs. Malaprop, Mrs. Drew could look back upon the season with some feeling of satisfaction despite managerial difficulties. She probably also remembered this season as the one in which another grandson, John Barrymore, was born.²⁹

The 1882-83 season, which opened September 4 and closed June 2, brought six new productions to the Arch Street Theatre. Several opera companies made appearances, and one

²⁹ John Sidney Blythe Barrymore was born on February 14, 1882. This son of Maurice and Georgie Drew Barrymore made his stage debut in Magda at the Cleveland Theatre in Chicago in 1903. He received acclaim in both England and America for his portrayal of Hamlet, which he once played for one hundred and one nights in New York, one night more than Edwin Booth's famous one hundred nights. Barrymore also acted in the movies. He died in 1942 leaving three children, Diana, Dolores Ethel, and John Blythe. Diana and John have elected to follow the family profession.

minstrel company appeared about the middle of May. Otherwise, the bills were made up of comedies, melodramas and a few tragedies. Among the players to appear were Madame Janauschek in Bleak House, James O'Neill in An American King (he had apparently not yet become identified with The Count of Monte Cristo), the Rankins in The Danites, Annie Pixley in M'liss, Chanfrau in Kit, and Oliver Doud Byron in Across the Continent.³⁰ Presumably Mrs. Drew continued to manage the house this season, although she probably delegated some responsibility to John J. Holmes her business manager.

Of interest to Mrs. Drew's patrons was undoubtedly the appearance of Sidney Drew in three plays,³¹ London Assurance, An Unequal Match, and Caste.³²

During the season Mrs. Drew again appeared in The

³⁰ Marshall, pp. 72, 85, 214, 226.

³¹ Sidney Drew (or Sydney White), according to an article which appeared in the New York Times, April 10, 1919, made his stage debut in Leonard Grover's production of Our Boarding House. He seems to have been the only one of Mrs. Drew's children or foster children not to have made his debut on the stage with her. Drew became a well-known light comedian, and with his first wife, Gladys Rankin went on several tours. With his second wife, Lucille McVey, he appeared in a number of successful domestic comedies in the early days of the motion pictures. After his death in 1919, the New York Times editorially praised him for raising the standards of comedy in the motion picture industry.

³² Marshall, p. 85. Drew appeared with Barton Hill and Ada Dyas.

Rivals with the Jefferson Company, and also acted Miss Lucretia McTabb in The Poor Gentleman. Jefferson played Ollapod.³³

The season was seemingly a profitable one for theatre managers in the Quaker City, according to a report of the managers made public in June, 1883, in which the following profits were noted: the Chestnut Street Theatre, \$25,000, the Chestnut Street Opera House, \$30,000, the Walnut Street Theatre, \$15,000, and the Arch, \$20,000.³⁴

The 1883-84 season brought forth six new productions. The opening date was August 27 and the closing was May 24. The patrons of the Arch this season saw operas, comic operas, comedies, melodramas, four Shakespearean plays, and one week of minstrel performers. Few well-known players, or perhaps more accurately, well-remembered players appeared at the Arch with the exception of Joseph Jefferson, who was seen in The Cricket on the Hearth, Lend Me Five Shillings, and Rip Van Winkle. Mrs. Drew seems not to have appeared at all. Fay Templeton was seen in Labelle Coquette, which may have been her first appearance at the Arch.³⁵

Marshall noted that seventeen theatres, twelve of

³³ Ibid., p. 72.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 75.

³⁵ Ibid., 226, 238.

which did business constantly, were in operation during 1884. Ten of them were legitimate houses, and according to his word, Philadelphia was "the best show town in the country." It was his opinion that "truly, Philadelphia was theatre made, and every manager struggled to get a part of the profits."³⁶ Even though she did not offer "big names," Mrs. Drew seems to have given her patrons variety in entertainment.

The 1884-85 season began August 25 and lasted through May 16, and nine new plays were offered. One opera company was engaged, but most of the other offerings seem to have been comedies or melodramas. Jefferson and Madame Janauschek were again the two most important stars to appear. Again this season The Rivals was not in the repertoire which Jefferson presented at the Arch.³⁷

Mrs. Drew appeared in only one play, The School for Scandal, during the season. In the cast were George Holland, Sam Hemple, Mrs. Clara Stoneall, Miss Mamie Floyd (who some years later became Maurice Barrymore's second wife), Mrs. Sol Smith and Thomas L. Coleman. The Inquirer had the following to say about Mrs. Drew's reception in the role of Lady Teazle:

³⁶ Ibid., p. 87.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 238, 251.

As was expected, the Arch Street Theatre was well filled last night and not a few of those persons were persons who have long known and admired Mrs. Drew as artist and manager. It is not too much to say that all were delighted with the entertainment, for rarely has applause been given more heartily or generously. The School for Scandal was prettily put upon the stage, and every attention was paid to detail so the rendering of the piece was unusually effective. Mrs. Drew's Lady Teazle was as bright, artistic and unctuous as usual, and she seemed to throw into the personation fresh spirit and humor, as if determined to make the revival of the comedy and her brief return to the stage a notable event in our dramatic annals. The screen scene was the chief point in the characterizations, of course, and so far as Mrs. Drew was concerned has never been given with such refined force. . . .³⁸

Even at the age of sixty-five Mrs. Drew was esteemed for her playing of the role, the only "young" part which she kept in her repertoire. The costumes and makeup used for this production no doubt helped to keep up the physical illusion and make her performance more believable. After the final performance of the play, which was a benefit for Mrs. Drew, the Inquirer reported that the house was "packed to the doors." Mrs. Drew was presented, on this evening, with a magnificent floral steamship, a gift from the attaches of the theatre. It was a going-away gift before her departure on a visit to England, her first trip to that country since her girlhood.³⁹ It is not known whether Mrs. Drew made any appearances in England during the trip.

³⁸ The Inquirer, May 12, 1885.

³⁹ Ibid., May 18, 1885.

Marshall said that the year 1885 was not as successful in Philadelphia generally, but it was by no means unfavorable to managers.⁴⁰ Again, variety seemed to be the policy at the Arch Street Theatre.

Mrs. Drew was back in Philadelphia to open the 1885-86 season on September 7 with The Rivals. She also closed the season on May 22 in a play called Engaged. Seven new plays were brought to the Arch this season, and the entertainment was provided by operas, comedies, and melodramas. Again this season, the names of stars, with the exception of Jefferson, were missing from the cast lists at the Arch. The Rivals was repeated in March. During the March engagement, Jefferson was also seen in some of his other pieces.⁴¹

In addition to her appearances with Jefferson, Mrs. Drew acted in London Assurance, a play in which she had not appeared in several years. Her role was that of Belinda in the play Engaged in which she was supported by Charles Walcott, Sidney Drew, and P. J. Reynolds.⁴²

Marshall reported that the year 1886 was also considered prosperous by theatre managers.⁴³ However, one wonders if business at the Arch did not lag a bit, bringing

⁴⁰ Marshall, p. 99.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 251, 262.

⁴² Ibid., p. 124.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 117.

the actress-manager back to the stage in more appearances than had been her wont in the past few years. In the earlier days of her management, she seemed to revive lagging interest by making appearances. Perhaps she attempted to do this also this season.

On May 31, Mrs. Drew, who was exceptionally generous about playing at benefits, appeared at one for Harry Edwards at the Star Theatre in New York. Others to appear were Mrs. Bowers, Louis James, Osmond Tearle, Mme. Ponisi, C. W. Couldock, and Richard Mansfield.⁴⁴

The actress-manager chose to open the 1886-87 season with Bulwer-Lytton's Money. She appeared in the role of Lady Franklin, and Georgie acted in her old role of Clara Douglas. Maurice Barrymore was also in the cast.⁴⁵

Only four plays new to Philadelphia were seen at this house during the season. Sidney Drew's play, Odd to Say the Least of it, made its first appearance in Philadelphia in a cast that included himself, Georgie Drew Barrymore, and Adine Stephens. E. H. Sothorn played an engagement at the Arch in One of our Girls, and Annie Pixley was seen in M'liss. Jefferson and his company presented The Rivals for two weeks, one in November and one in April.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Odell, XIII, 23.

⁴⁵ Marshall, 262, 272.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

An event of interest to Mrs. Drew and her family, and doubtless to many people in the theatre world, particularly the older players, was the celebration of Mrs. Kinlock's ninety-first birthday on March 7. The elderly actress retained her interest in the theatre and was a weekly visitor at the Arch Street Theatre until shortly before her death, August 11.⁴⁷

In April, 1887, Mrs. Drew appeared in New York at the Bowery Theatre in The Rivals without Jefferson. She was supported by her daughter, Georgie Drew Barrymore, in the role of Lydia Languish and Sidney Drew in the Jefferson role. Mrs. Drew must have used Jefferson's version of the play, for the character of Julia was omitted from the cast list.⁴⁸ Some years later, after Mrs. Drew and Jefferson stopped playing together, Mrs. Drew and Sidney toured the country in this play.

In May, a benefit was given for C. W. Couldock on the fiftieth anniversary of his stage debut. Among the players to appear were Edwin Booth, John Gilbert, Fanny Davenport, Richard Mantell, Lawrence Barrett, James O'Neill, Joseph Jefferson, and Mrs. Drew. The third act of The Rivals was one of the selections given, and Mrs. Drew and Jefferson were seen in their usual roles and

⁴⁷ The Inquirer, March 8, August 12, 1887.

⁴⁸ Odell, XIII, 264, 360.

O'Neill was Sir Lucius O'Trigger.⁴⁹

The 1887-88 season opened September 5 and closed May 26, and ten new plays were seen. Comedies and melodramas were the order of the day this season. Among the players to appear were Madame Modjeska, supported by Maurice Barrymore, William Gillette and Joseph Jefferson. The Rivals was not presented at the Arch this season. Mrs. Drew appeared in one play, The School for Scandal, which was presented the next to the last week of the season.⁵⁰

Even though Philadelphians did not have an opportunity to see The Rivals, the neighboring city, New York, saw it twice during the season. The first presentation was on October 17, and the New York Times on the next day said:

Mr. Jefferson and Mrs. Drew were seen in "The Rivals" at the Star Theatre last evening by a large assemblage of spectators. Their acting in the two characters of Sheridan's comedy now associated with their names does not call for criticism. In the harsh meaning often, but incorrectly, applied to that unfortunate word their acting is, indeed, above criticism. But it is a pleasing duty to record their coming, and to dwell upon their artistic merits. . . .

The reviewer lauded Jefferson's performance and then said of Mrs. Drew:

⁴⁹ Ibid., XIII, 233.

⁵⁰ Marshall, pp. 133, 272, 283.

There is not a trace of artificiality in the whole performance. It is as easy and simple as it is amusing, and it is so amusing that laughter is incessant while Bob is on the scene. And underlying it all is the perfection of dramatic art. Mrs. Drew's portrayal of Mrs. Malaprop is equally good. No one in our time has ever filled that character so well as she. She makes the big words actually express the meaning she intends to convey with them, and does not use them to pause upon for the sake of exciting laughter. Her arguments, therefore, are irresistible. The sentimental side of the antique widow's nature is depicted with delicious humor, and her courteous interview with Captain Absolute regarding Ensign Beverly's infamous letter is a rare example of high comedy.

The cast included Emma Vaders, Geoffrey Hawley, Barton Hill, Thomas Jefferson, and G. W. Denham.

At a benefit given December 1, 1867, in New York for the Actors' Fund, Mrs. Drew and the Jefferson Company presented the second act of The Rivals. Henry Irving and his Lyceum Company, which was playing in New York, were seen in a farce called Jingle.⁵¹ Irving later remarked that Mrs. Drew was the best actress in her line that he had ever seen.⁵²

Mrs. Drew had another great sorrow this season. Her niece, Miss Adine Stephens, who was now known on the stage as Adine Drew, died of consumption in January at the age of twenty-eight. The young actress, after playing small roles several seasons with members of her family,

⁵¹ The New York Times, December 1, 1867.

⁵² Drew, My Years on the Stage, p. 190.

made her debut in opera (or operetta as we should probably classify it) in Indiana. She played one season with McCaull's Opera Company before being stricken.⁵³

September 3 marked the opening and May 18 the closing of the 1888-89 season in which twelve new plays were seen by Arch Street Theatre patrons. Comedies and melodramas made up the program for the season, and some of the players seen were: Sol Smith Russell in A Poor Relation, Mr. and Mrs. James A. Herne in Drifting Apart, Kate Claxton in The World Against Her, Annie Pixley in M'liss, William Gillette in Held By the Enemy, and Sidney Drew in his first real success, A Legal Wreck. Jefferson seems not to have been at the Arch this season, and it is not known by this writer whether Mrs. Drew appeared. Marshall listed a production of The School for Scandal for April 22-27.⁵⁴ It is possible that Mrs. Drew again acted in this play.

Early in November, the Jefferson Company appeared in New York, and Odell, who saw the production, commented upon the splendid acting of Mrs. Drew and John Gilbert:

He /John Gilbert/ was engaged by Jefferson for a season of The Rivals, and thus the three finest comedians I ever saw together--Jefferson, Gilbert and Mrs. John Drew--appeared in the Sheridan comedy, to the delight of all capable of apprehending

⁵³ The Inquirer, January 20, 1888. The newspaper account referred to her as Adine Drew, adopted daughter of Mrs. Drew.

⁵⁴ Marshall, pp. 283, 295.

the great privilege afforded. The scenes between Gilbert and Mrs. Drew were like lace-work in delicacy of finish, but exhilarating, as well, in comic effect. I never saw such great acting, and shall never see its like again. . . . This glorious unforgettable Rivals lasted through November 10th, and marked the farewell, as it proved, of John Gilbert from our stage.⁵⁵

After their years together at the Arch Street Theatre, it is small wonder that Mrs. Drew and Gilbert played well together.

On May 22, Mrs. Drew acted in a farewell testimonial benefit given for James E. Murdoch, veteran actor and elocutionist. Mrs. Drew's friendship for Murdoch went back to 1835 when both played at the St. Charles Street Theatre in New Orleans. Mrs. Drew, George Holland, Murdoch, and John Drew played a three-act version of The School for Scandal, and Murdoch also appeared in "a most extraordinary arrangement" of The Stranger with Mrs. Bowers. The Ledger and Transcript, which reported this benefit in their pages, said that Mrs. Drew had seldom given a more delightful performance, and commented that "a sense of duty to the public impelled her, in spite of private griefs, to fulfill her engagement with her old friend."⁵⁶ The private grief was the death of her daughter, Louisa Mendum.⁵⁷ Thus in three successive seasons Mrs.

⁵⁵ Odell, XIV, 30.

⁵⁶ The Ledger and Transcript, May 23, 1839.

⁵⁷ Mrs. Mendum died in Boston, May 17, 1889, according to the Division of Vital Statistics, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Record of Death, 1889, Vol. 402, 166, No. 3847.

Drew suffered the loss of her mother, her niece, and her eldest child.

The 1889-90 season opened earlier than other seasons of recent years. The first play, The Burglar with Sidney and his wife, Gladys Rankin Drew, opened August 31. It played two weeks and was followed by Captain Swift with Maurice Barrymore. Among the players to appear during this season, which again concentrated on comedies and melodramas, were Kate Claxton, Annie Pixley, and Jefferson.

Jefferson had taken W. J. Florence, the well-known Irish comedian into the company this season, and the group was known as the Jefferson-Florence Company. It seems to have been a happy combination for Florence became an inimitable Sir Lucius O'Trigger. Jefferson, Florence, Mrs. Drew, and Viola Allen appeared in The Rivals at the Arch for the first week in December and seemingly were so well received that Mrs. Drew decided that they should make another appearance during the season, and they returned in March. Sidney Drew also brought his play, The Burglar, back to the Arch during the same month.⁵⁸

In announcing the appearance of Mrs. Drew in the revival of Buckstone's play, the last play of the season, the Inquirer made this comment:

⁵⁸ Marshall, p. 295.

An event of more than ordinary dramatic importance will be the appearance of Mrs. John Drew at the Arch Street Theatre in "Married Life." As Mrs. Henry Dove in Buckstone's comedy, Mrs. Drew won one of her earlier and best sustained triumphs. It is one of the ladies [Sic] favorite parts like Mrs. Malaprop and Lady Teazle, and her reappearance in the character means a real treat for play-goers in the higher work of the stage. Mrs. Dove is a part that in itself fits the distinguished actress like a glove, but she invests it with a naivete and grace so characteristically her own that it possesses a charm in its inherent merits.

During her appearances in New York, the papers of that city united in describing her appearance recently in The Rivals as the representative American comedienne. It did not require their approval, however, to stamp Mrs. Drew with such distinction. For many years she has been accorded one of the highest places on the American stage, and in a line of characters of which the heroine of one of Buckstone's plays is a representative specimen, she has been unanimously conceded to be without an equal. She will be supported at the Arch next week by an excellent company which includes: Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Drew, Miss Nina Boucicault, George Holland, Fred C. Ross, C. Leslie Allen, Emma Maddern.⁵⁹

The same newspaper said later that the play met with an "enthusiastic reception at the hands of a brilliant audience which filled every seat in the house." It described Mrs. Drew's performance in these words:

Mrs. John Drew as Mrs. Henry Dove gave a highly unctuous and amusing rendition, her work showing the perfect artist at every point. She was called before the curtain repeatedly. The cast was unusually strong, consisting of artists of the old school combined with some of the rising talent of today. The comedy was elegantly set and costumed.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ The Inquirer, May 9, 1890.

⁶⁰ Ibid., May 13, 1890.

Mrs. Drew toured extensively with the Jefferson-Florence Company this season. They played an engagement in New York at the Star Theatre from October 14 through November 9, and the New York Times made this comment:

The oldest inhabitant hardly remembers a time when there were so many big names on the theatre billboards as there are now. Salvini, Booth and Modjeska, Jefferson, Florence and Mrs. Drew, (the name of the latter, by the way is not on the billboards, although her Mrs. Malaprop is as fine an example of comedy acting as the work of her associates,) and the Kendals are dividing evenly a large share of the people's money and admiration.
 . . .⁶¹

The veteran actress played in at least one benefit performance each season. On October 17, with the Jefferson-Florence Company, she appeared at a benefit for the family of Charles B. Bishop. Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Kendal were also on the program, as was E. H. Sothern. David Belasco was the stage manager.⁶²

Mrs. Drew's theatre had to compete with seventeen other theatres in Philadelphia this season, the greatest number of playhouses thus far in Philadelphia's history. This included seven legitimate houses, six second-rate legitimate theatres, two vaudeville houses, a minstrel theatre, a museum, and the Academy of Music. Marshall said that the year had been a trying one for the popular

⁶¹ The New York Times, October 20, 1889.

⁶² Ibid., October 14, 1889.

priced theatres, but that none of the better houses showed "the slightest indication of a loss."⁶³

Before the season ended, Mrs. Drew made an appearance in another Pennsylvania city. She appeared in Pittsburgh on May 11 in The School for Scandal.⁶⁴ Mrs. Drew, who was now over seventy years old, had had a busy season.

Mrs. John Drew's thirtieth year as manager of the Arch Street Theatre began September 1, 1890 and ended May 9, 1891. Among the players seen during the season were Annie Pixley, a yearly visitor, (who was at this time seen in The Deacon's Daughter), Sol Smith Russell, Effie Ellsler, and the Jefferson-Florence Company.⁶⁵

The Jefferson-Florence Company's engagement was pronounced "the most brilliant and successful engagement known in the history of any Philadelphia theatre for years."⁶⁶ They first played The Heir at Law, and Mrs. Drew was not a member of the cast. Then they brought back The Rivals for Philadelphians to enjoy again. In announcing this presentation, the Inquirer said that

⁶³ Marshall, p. 152.

⁶⁴ James A. Lowrie, "A History of the Pittsburgh Stage (1861-1891)," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1943, p. 222.

⁶⁵ The Inquirer, September 1-1890, May 9, 1891.

⁶⁶ Ibid., December 4, 1890.

there were "no words to commend the inimitable impersonation of Mrs. Malaprop by Mrs. John Drew." It said that her Mrs. Malaprop was "a distinct creation, unique, unparalleled, unapproachable."⁶⁷ According to a newspaper comment, the three fine players seemed to complement each other rather than detract from each other's performances:

. . . The perfection with which Mr. Jefferson plays Bob Acres does not dim the lustre of Mr. Florence's Sir Lucius O' Trigger, or Mrs. Drew's Mrs. Malaprop. They are all coordinate parts and each deserves the highest commendation. This work of theirs is art. It is the perfection of art. . . .⁶⁸

Mrs. Drew's appearance in The School for Scandal at the close of the current season was heralded by the Inquirer in glowing terms. Mrs. Drew had long been held in high esteem in the city in which she chose to spend most of her life, but despite a statement to the contrary already quoted, the praise she received for her acting in other cities doubtless added to her reputation at home. On this occasion, the Inquirer, always a friendly newspaper as far as Mrs. Drew's efforts were concerned, had this to say:

Mrs. John Drew, who is today the most distinguished representative of the purely American stage, will make her reappearance on the Philadelphia boards at the Arch Street Theatre this week, when she will present her famous impersonation of Lady Teazle in an elaborate production of The School for Scandal. Mrs. Drew

⁶⁷ Ibid., December 9, 1890.

⁶⁸ Ibid., December 9, 1890.

has been for years the one distinctive figure in the artistic life in Philadelphia. She is confessedly, in the line of characters in which she appears the foremost American actress. . . .⁶⁹

In reviewing the first performance, the same newspaper remarked that the audience was large and fashionable, and said that it "thoroughly enjoyed the fine acting of the star in a part in which she stands today without a rival, and the elaborate manner in which all the characters in the comedy were acted and costumed." The reviewer also said that her work in the role of Lady Teazle had been "favorably commented upon for years." He likened it to the green bay tree that never loses its color but improves with age. The reviewer also praised Mrs. Drew for selecting people suitable for the other roles. Eben Plympton and George Holland were members of the cast.⁷⁰ This was Mrs. Drew's last appearance in the role on the Arch Street Theatre stage. Brown, the theatre historian, said Mrs. Drew was "a perfect picture of the pretty, spoiled, but honest country girl." He also commented that the powdered head-dresses which generally disfigured the ladies on the stage, made her look many years younger than she was.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Ibid., May 3, 1891.

⁷⁰ Ibid., May 5, 1891.

⁷¹ Brown, "Mrs. John Drew," p. 134.

A personal note concerning Mrs. Drew appeared in the Inquirer for December 16, reporting the loss of her diamonds. It seems that the lady sometimes wore them in a chamois bag around her neck for safekeeping, but removed it and left it on her dressing table before a consultation with her physician. The jewels disappeared while she was engaged, and detectives were called in. They did not find them, but suggested that they must have been taken by someone who knew her habits. The newspaper gave no further report of them, but John Barrymore, her grandson, said later that the elderly actress immediately suspected where they had gone and could hardly wait for the detectives to depart so she could use her well-worn slipper on him.⁷²

On May 2, Mrs. Drew invited the pupils of the Institution for the Deaf to visit a matinee performance of Mark Murphy's Comedians in O'Dowd's Neighbor. This was the first instance noted of the Arch Street Theatre's being used to entertain the less fortunate members of the Philadelphia community. It was a benefit performance of a different kind.⁷³

Later in the season Mrs. Drew and the Jefferson-Florence Company appeared in scenes from The Rivals at a

⁷² John Barrymore, Confessions of an Actor (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., c. 1926), pages not numbered. Hereafter cited as J. Barrymore, Confessions of an Actor.

⁷³ The Inquirer, May 2, 1891.

benefit performance sponsored to raise money for the Washington Arch Fund. The program also included Richard Mansfield in a "drawing room entertainment."⁷⁴ This was a new kind of benefit for Mrs. Drew, for she had always appeared at benefits to help people prior to this time.

Mrs. John Drew's thirty-first and last season as the lessee of the Arch Street Theatre began on September 7, 1891, and closed on May 5, 1892. The productions this season ran toward comedies and melodramas, which seemed to make up the limited popular theatre fare of the day. Many new players made appearances during the season, but a few old players as Madame Janauschek, Kate Claxton, Sidney Drew's Company and the Jefferson-Florence Company made appearances.⁷⁵

The outstanding event of the season was the reappearance of the last-named group on November 9. This was not only their last engagement at the Arch Street Theatre, but it was their last engagement as an acting combination, for Florence took a cold, developed pneumonia, and died on November 19. When the pair announced to the press at the beginning of their engagement that this was their last season together, they did not realize that the announcement was prophetic. The company did not

⁷⁴ Odell, XIV, 570.

⁷⁵ The Inquirer, September 7, 1891-May 5, 1892.

disband after the death of Florence, but continued the tour which included the far west. Louis James took over Florence's role. At the end of the season, however, the company did disband in order that Jefferson could go into semi-retirement and act only a few weeks each season.

There was no announcement of Mrs. Drew's plans to retire until April 24, when an item appeared in the "Stage Gossip" column of the Inquirer to the effect that the week of May 2 would be the closing one of thirty-one consecutive seasons of Mrs. Drew's management, and would also mark her retirement from the management of the Arch Street Theatre.

Apparently early in the season Mrs. Drew did not plan to retire, for the opening announcement for the season said:

During the summer recess the Arch has been brightened up and will enter the field this season with the prestige derived from its long and successful career under the direction of Mrs. John Drew. There is every indication that the season will be one of the best on record and that this favorite house will continue to hold its place in the front rank of the most popular and profitable of the first-class theatres in America.⁷⁶

However, the theatre situation had changed in Philadelphia during the seasons since Marshall had reported it as a thriving business. Mrs. Drew seems to have felt

⁷⁶ Ibid., August 23, 1891.

that she could no longer continue to operate a first-class house and decided to give it up. In her own words, she explained her decision:

. . . when I returned there in 1892, at the close of the season, I found the business of the season had been so very poor; and as the outlook for the next season was no better, I concluded to give it up (if the stockholders would permit me to do so), and I wrote to the Board of Agents to that effect, and they agreed to my wish.⁷⁷

Mrs. Drew said also that there were two theatres on Chestnut Street and one on Broad that eventually became one having the same manager. She reported that these theatres, and the old Walnut and the new Park got all the best stars and combinations, and she was "obliged to put up with what they kindly left."⁷⁸ A shift in population caused the new theatres to be built farther away from the older theatrical center in order to "tap the hitherto unfulfilled desire of those people who could not easily get to the theatrical center," according to Marshall, who reported this trend in his discussion of the 1889 season. Marshall called this the beginning of the neighborhood theatre in Philadelphia.⁷⁹ Mrs. Drew said that people began to find that her theatre was "out

⁷⁷ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 125.

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 117, 118.

⁷⁹ Marshall, p. 152.

of the way" because it was "too far uptown." Thus a combination of factors seems to have brought about the closure of the once illustrious Arch Street Theatre.

John J. Holmes, who had become Mrs. Drew's manager shortly after her son-in-law was relieved of the position, was still with the house when Mrs. Drew gave it up.

The actress-manager's final offering, Sheridan Knowles' The Love Chase, had been revised, "modernized," so it was said, by J. H. McVicker, veteran Chicago actor and theatre manager. The cast included, besides Mrs. Drew, W. F. Owen, Eben Plympton, Eleanor Moretti, Kate Vandenhooft, and others.

A review of the first night's performance stated:

Judging from the large and enthusiastic audience which assembled at the Arch Street Theatre last night, the final week of the season, and at the same time the week that closes Mrs. John Drew's career as lessee of that theatre, after a continuous management of thirty-one years, will end in a blaze of glory.

The reviewer made this report of Mrs. Drew's acting of the role selected for her last appearance:

In assuming the role of Widow Green, Mrs. Drew made no mistake, as all through the comedy she was the husband hunting widow to the life. Her walk, her talk, her actions could not be improved upon, and the impersonation stands as a good companion piece to her Mrs. Malaprop.⁸⁰

Another writer also approved of Mrs. Drew's acting

⁸⁰ The Inquirer, May 3, 1892.

of the role:

Many of the older people who were in the audience at the Arch Street Theatre to see Mrs. John Drew in The Love Chase were carried back in their imagination thirty years or more and enjoyed themselves as in their youth, witnessing an old-fashioned play presented by an entire company of drilled actors, with all the precision and attention to detail that used to characterize the work of Mrs. John Drew's stock company. . . .

Mrs. Drew made an admirable Widow Cheerly, self-complacent, affected and filled with the comedy spirit in all her by-play. She is still incomparable in giving full expression and value to her lines, and acts with uncommon spirit and intelligence.⁸¹

Still another newspaper writer reported:

Mrs. Drew as the Widow Green was, as is the case of all she does, finished and effective. The part offers many chances for quiet, pointed acting, and these were utilized in a manner that showed to perfection her rare familiarity with the requirements of this school of the drama.⁸²

On the final evening, Mrs. Drew made the following touching little speech when she was called before the curtain:

The time has come for me to say farewell. We meet now for the last time as auditor and manager. This is much worse for me than it is for you. It is a wrench for me, I confess it, after a most successful thirty-one years in this dear old theatre. I don't know exactly what to say. This week has been a very happy one for me. The only drawback was that it was the last.

To hear these walls resound with applause for simply acting, and nothing more, the acting of an old comedy,

⁸¹ The Public Ledger, May 3, 1892.

⁸² The Times-Philadelphia, May 3, 1892.

merely acting, is something to make an actor's heart almost burst with joy. (long applause)⁸³

I thank you sincerely, you representing the public, for your attendance and your kind appreciation. I must also thank the entire press of this city. Their notices and criticisms of this play have been more than generous. I should feel proud if I deserve half that the press has said of me. And now let me add the undying gratitude which I feel for the owners of this theatre for thirty-one years of unswerving courtesy and substantial kindness, which I can never repay, but which I am glad of the opportunity to acknowledge publicly now. There is nothing more, I think, to say (again the actress' voice faltered), but farewell, and, as Dickens' 'Tiny Tim' says: "God bless us, every one."⁸⁴

It was also reported:

The actress bowed her head, her eye glistened with tears, the audience applauded and slowly rose to depart, and the green curtain descended and hid from view the most remarkable and memorable figure in the history of Philadelphia theatrical management.⁸⁵

Mrs. Drew was given a reception at the Art Club on the afternoon of May 19, and the Public Ledger printed an editorial concerning the honor accorded Mrs. Drew:

Mrs. John Drew fully deserves the honor to be paid to her in the form of a reception at the Art Club. She has been an artist all her life, and has proved this week by her assumption of a difficult character that she has lost nothing of her skill as a comedienne. Notwithstanding the limitations that increasing years have put upon her, she is still without a superior in the humorous delineation of a character.⁸⁶

⁸³ This portion of Mrs. Drew's speech was included in a review of her life's work which appeared in the Public Ledger, September 1, 1897.

⁸⁴ The full address is to be found in an unidentified clipping, Brown's Scrapbook II, 219, Rare Book Collection, University of Pennsylvania Library.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ The Public Ledger, May 7, 1892.

Mrs. Drew was given a testimonial benefit at the Academy of Music, and despite the fact that its huge auditorium seated more than 2000 people, and every available bit of standing room was occupied, it was said that nearly 1000 persons were turned away. The Honorable Wayne MacVeagh delivered a eulogy to Mrs. Drew during the evening, and a portion of his speech which elicited great applause was:

And the crowning delight of the evening is that Mrs. Drew deserves all we can say in her praise; and I am only repeating the words of the most learned member of our Bar when I remind you that "to Mrs. Drew we owe it that the theatre has been purified of contaminating associations, and innocence and youth are no longer liable to be disgusted or injured when resorting to it for amusement or improvement." The changes she made to secure those ends were made in a brave and noble spirit, at very serious pecuniary loss; and for my own part, I feel a debt of personal gratitude to her for what she has done towards redeeming dramatic representations in this city from evil surroundings and elevating them to a place of refined enjoyment. She has been for over thirty years a most successful theatrical manager, whatever proper test of success may be applied.⁸⁷

The program arranged for the evening consisted of a one-act comedy, The Organist, which came over from Frohman's Lyceum Company, and the second act of William H. Crane's comedy, The Senator, which was also brought from New York. M. Guille, Clara Poole, Adelaide Randall, and William Mertens from the Grand Opera Company sang the

⁸⁷ Ibid., June 7, 1892.

quartet from Rigoletto. Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Kendal appeared in a one-act comedy, A Happy Pair. Miss Annie Pixley, a frequent star at the Arch, sang several songs. Then Mrs. Drew appeared and received a tremendous ovation including cheers from the audience. She was joined by Joseph Jefferson, who also received an ovation. The two, with the assistance of Viola Allen, Maurice Barrymore, Roland Reed, and Louis James, presented scenes from The Rivals. At the close of the evening, Mrs. Drew received another ovation from a standing and cheering audience, who called for a speech, but Mrs. Drew was too much overcome with emotion to respond and could only bow. Jefferson responded for her.⁸⁸

The Times-Philadelphia for May 9, contained an editorial which reviewed Mrs. Drew's career briefly and promised a story of Mrs. Drew's career as director of the Arch Street Theatre in a forth-coming Sunday issue.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ The Inquirer, June 7, 1892.

⁸⁹ The story was entitled "Mrs. Drew As Manager" and appeared May 8 and 15. The articles, which have previously been cited, contained information as to some of the members of her stock companies, some of the plays produced, and the opening and closing dates of seasons. The data is accurate, for the most part, except for the lists of new roles. The author /Seilhamer/ lists Mrs. Drew's new roles beginning with her first season as manager. Many of the roles he lists as new ones were ones she had played as a star and as a leading lady in stock.

The editorial stated:

Such an event as Mrs. Drew's retirement is an occasion too important to be passed by without recurrence to the story of her thirty-one years at the Arch. It is a story without parallel in theatrical history. Few men have controlled a single house for so many years; no other woman ever did it before.

The editorial also commented briefly upon Mrs. Drew's management of the theatre which was at first a stock theatre, then a star theatre, and finally a combination house. Out of the stock company it mentioned the following actors and actresses who had gained prominence: Charlotte Thompson, Annie Graham, Isabella Freeman, Lizzie Price, Fanny Davenport, Ada Rehan, Georgie Drew, L. R. Shewell, Barton Hill, Robert Craig, Stuart Robson, Louis James, and John Drew.⁹⁰ The writer of the editorial noted that nearly all the "brightest stars" of the day had appeared at the theatre and listed: E. L. Davenport, J. W. Wallack, Jr., Kate Bateman, J. S. Clarke, Caroline Richings, Mme. Celeste, Mrs. D. P. Bowers, Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams, the Florences, James E. Murdoch, Mrs. General [sic] Lander, Lawrence Barrett, Sol Smith Russell, and Daniel Sully.⁹¹

⁹⁰ The following might also have been included: John Drew, Sr., John Gilbert, Sam Hemple, Frank Drew, Mrs. E. N. Thayer, Clara Fisher Maeder, Roland Reed, and McKee Rankin.

⁹¹ Other stars who made appearances who might be mentioned were: Joseph Jefferson, Edwin Booth, John Wilkes Booth, Charles Fechter, Dion Boucicault, John McCullough, Edwin Adams, Julia Dean, Mme. Modjeska, Mme. Janauschek, Mme. Ponisi, E. A. Sothern, William Gillette, Lotta, Maurice Barrymore, James O'Neill, and Sidney Drew. In fact, during the period 1861-1862, most of the best-known players appeared except Edwin Forrest and Charlotte Cushman.

When Mrs. Drew died, a little more than five years later, her work as a director of a leading theatrical establishment for more than thirty years was again reviewed. The Philadelphia Evening Telegraph discussed the particular care with which she mounted her productions, a fact which was noted frequently in newspaper accounts of productions placed upon her stage during her years as a director of a stock company. After the house went over to a combination house, a stage director had charge of seeing that visiting attractions were well placed upon the stage, and special revivals which featured Mrs. Drew were always praised for their visual effects. The Evening Telegraph was of the opinion that Mrs. Drew's efforts in raising the level of productions in her theatre had a far-reaching effect:

But Mrs. Drew was also entitled to still further commendation in the role of manager and director of the Arch Street Theatre, at which, since her advent in these capacities, she had produced thirty-two plays, forty comedies, fifty-seven dramas, five operas, four burlesques, and two pantomimes, many of them for the first time on any stage. All these pieces were produced in the highest style of stage art. In this branch of the profession Mrs. Drew was an admitted master. In preparation of scenery, in stage furniture, in costumes, in dramatic appointments, in decorations of all kinds, her skill, judgment and taste were matchless. She knew how to heighten a dramatic effect by the introduction of scenic foils and give greater realism to situations by the manner in which they were aided by the brush of the painter. As instances of this kind of art, attention, need only be directed to the manner in which "Jessie Brown," "Ours," "Rosedale," and scores of other pieces were put upon the stage by Mrs. Drew during her managerial career. Whatever was necessary to

produce the most complete illustration of a dramatic situation was always procured by her, and used with the best possible effect. This is a most essential point in estimating the position of Mrs. Drew as a producer of new or old pieces upon the stage. When she assumed the reins of supreme control at the Arch Street Theatre a new era dawned upon the history of stage management in this city, so far as the complete production of dramatic works was concerned. Whether it was a Shakesperian revival, or the exhibition of romantic or domestic dramas, the like care and completeness were manifested in all particulars. Nothing was slighted, nothing was done in a slovenly incomplete manner. The practice educated the taste of the people in relation to stage effects, and thus commenced a revolution that has spread to all the large cities and produced most desirable results. Mrs. Drew also had the ability to costume characters in a matchless manner. Herself one of the finest dressers on the American stage, she could at the same time so arrange the dresses of others as to make a proper and harmonious contrast and produce charming effects from a historical or society point of view. As actress and manager Mrs. Drew stamped her peculiar powers and individuality upon the stage of the country, and is entitled to the credit of whatever results have flowed from her studies in this direction.⁹²

Unfortunately, however, Mrs. Drew has not been given much credit for her contributions to theatre art, and much of her work in the theatre, except for her portrayal of the role of Mrs. Malaprop, has been forgotten,

After Mrs. Drew gave up the Arch Street Theatre, it ceased to be one of the leading theatrical establishments of the city. In fact, it seemed to decline steadily until the stockholders decided to raze it. Henry T. Murdock, in a signed article entitled "Another Landmark

⁹² The Philadelphia Evening Telegraph, August 31, 1897.

Disappears," wrote that when Mrs. Drew retired from the management, "something vital was extinguished at the Arch, never to be rekindled."⁹³ William J. Gilmore, whose theatre had burned down, took over the lease, and the house was renovated during the summer, electricity installed, and an asbestos curtain and firewall added to the equipment. A newspaper, which reported the letting of the lease, commented:

The owners of the Arch have been exceedingly fortunate in securing a lessee of Manager Gilmore's well-known liberality, long experience and thorough business shrewdness. He is one of the few men capable of changing the fortunes of that establishment and making it as popular and remunerative as it was in its most palmy days.⁹⁴

Gilmore, however, seems only to have wanted a house to use until a new theatre could be built on the site of his old one, and so he gave up the lease when his new theatre, Gilmore's Auditorium was completed. From that time on, the fortunes of the theatre steadily declined. A stock company under the direction of William F. Blande lasted only two weeks in the theatre in 1894. For a time the house served as a German language theatre, then under Charles E. Blaney's management, it was a "ten, twenty, and thirt' house" and produced such "thrillers" as The Still Alarm, The Police Patrol, Bertha, the Sewing

⁹³ The Evening Public Ledger, June 26, 1936.

⁹⁴ The Inquirer, June 5, 1892.

Machine Girl, and Nellie, the Beautiful Cloak Model.

There was also a short period of musical comedy under the management of W. E. Blumenthal, and for a time the Arch was a Yiddish Theatre under the direction of Max Thomashefsky. Some fine examples of Yiddish drama were presented, but evidently this venture did not prove financially successful and the manager turned the theatre into a burlesque house. It was operated as such until it was closed by the police when it offered "slapstick vulgarity and an unexpurgated Oriental dance" to its patrons.⁹⁵ The fortunes of the house had indeed changed since Mrs. Drew's day. After the burlesque manager lost his lease, the house seems to have been occupied only sporadically. At times it was used for mass meetings and for Sunday night assemblies of the foreign born, and one writer commented in this connection:

. . . it offered in its shirt-sleeved assemblies of workers a strange contrast to those days when smart carriages would drive up in front and Philadelphia's leaders of society, attired in evening dress, came to witness one of Mrs. Drew's special offerings or the appearance of some player of national note.⁹⁶

In the summer of 1936, the older people of Philadelphia were doubtless saddened by the news that the one

⁹⁵ The Evening Public Ledger. June 26, 1936. and
⁹⁵ The Evening Public Ledger, June 26, 1936, and
The Evening Bulletin, July 10, 1936.

⁹⁶ The Evening Bulletin, July 10, 1936.

hundred eight year old theatre was to be torn down. To many, the theatre was not only a landmark, but a symbol of the one-time glory of the house under Mrs. John Drew's management. Thus the scene of so many of the actress-manager's beautifully staged productions no longer exists, and cars are now being parked within the area once occupied by the Arch Street Theatre.

CHAPTER XII

LAST YEARS (1892-1897)

When Mrs. John Drew retired from the management of the Arch Street Theatre, it was not to withdraw to a life of ease. Even if the seventy-two year old actress had wished to do so, it was not possible, for despite her long years as an actress and manager, Mrs. Drew had very little money when she walked off the boards of the Arch Street Theatre for the last time. The well-mounted and even lavish productions at her theatre, the large home which she had maintained for herself and various members of her family, her general "open-handedness" as far as relatives and friends were concerned,¹ and the decreased income of the past few years, left her in a financial status which was all too common among members of the acting profession of that day. In describing her situation upon her retirement, Mrs. Drew said:

¹ Several writers have mentioned Mrs. Drew's generosity as far as her family was concerned, including John Drew, John Barrymore, Lionel Barrymore, and Gene Fowler in works already cited. She was known to the actors in her theatre as "the Duchess," but she was lovingly called "Mum Mum" by her grandchildren. During her lifetime, she was the "head" of the family and shouldered the responsibilities of that position.

The next thing, what was I to do with myself! I couldn't live in Philadelphia in the manner in which I had always lived; couldn't afford it. So I moved to New York, after nearly forty years of house-keeping in Philadelphia. It was a terrible wrench! To look for "something to do" at seventy-two years of age! But I was still in the possession of my splendid health, good spirits, and the love of my two remaining children.²

Mrs. Drew said that shortly after going to New York, her adopted son, Sidney, "immediately undertook to make a five weeks' engagement; and as the terms were financially a certainty, I accepted and played for the five weeks with great success in Philadelphia, Brooklyn and Harlem."³

The actress unfortunately did not name this engagement. Her first known engagement was one with Julia Marlowe's Company. According to Miss Marlowe's biographer, that actress spent the summer of 1892 preparing The Love Chase for production, and Mrs. Drew was specially engaged for the role of the Widow Green. Miss Marlowe played Constance,⁴ and Robert Taber, who later became her first husband, was Wildrake. Mrs. Drew was with Miss Marlowe the

² Autobiographical Sketch, p. 129.

³ Ibid., p. 130.

⁴ Julia Marlowe (Sarah Frances Frost) (1866-1950), was best known for her Shakespearean roles, but was also a success in modern plays. With her second husband, E. H. Sothorn, she appeared in Shakespearean roles in both England and America. In 1926, they presented a series of plays at Stratford-on-Avon.

week of March 27-April 1, 1893.⁵

Mrs. Drew played an engagement with Charles Frohman's comedians in Sydney Grundy's comedy, The Arabian Nights, which opened April 10, 1893, at the Standard Theatre for a run of three weeks. The New York Herald-Tribune said of this production:

An audience that filled the Standard Theatre last night found Sydney Grundy's "Arabian Nights" at the hands of Charles Frohman's clever company of comedians exceedingly entertaining. The expressions of satisfaction were numerous and emphatic. . . .

Joseph Holland, as a flagrant, engaging liar, appeared to excellent advantage, while Mrs. John Drew Senior, who was greeted most cordially, delighted everyone with her inimitable impersonation of the mother-in-law.⁶

On May 15, Mrs. Drew and a company made up almost entirely of members of the Drew and Rankin families appeared at the Park Theatre in Philadelphia in The Rivals. Mrs. Drew was, of course, Mrs. Malaprop, McKee Rankin was Sir Anthony Absolute, Sidney Drew was Bob Acres, Mrs. Sidney Drew acted Lydia, and Phyllis Rankin played Lucy.⁷ The same play was acted at the Harlem Opera House during the last week of the season, May 29-June 3.⁸

⁵ Charles E. Russell, Julia Marlowe, Her Life and Art (New York and London: D. Appleton and Co., 1926), p. 192.

⁶ The New York Herald-Tribune, April 11, 1893.

⁷ Park Theatre Playbill, May 15, 1893, Pennsylvania Historical Society Collection of Programs and Playbills.

⁸ Odell, XV, 385.

Early in July, Mrs. Drew lost one of her remaining children, Georgie Drew Barrymore, who died from tuberculosis in a sanitorium in California. The Barrymore children had made their homes with Mrs. Drew much of their lives and one or more of them continued to be with her as long as she lived.

Despite the silver panic of 1893, Sidney Drew booked engagements for a tour that covered much of the country. Although the company was well received by the people who could afford to attend the theatre, the season was a losing one financially.⁹

It is not possible to retrace the route taken by the company, for they visited most of the large cities of the nation and many of the small ones as well. Lionel Barrymore went on the tour and was put in the cast of The Rivals in the role of Thomas. According to Barrymore, he failed miserably, particularly in the front scene and was removed from the cast by his grandmother.¹⁰ Barrymore gave the place of this incident as Kansas City. Although he did not say so, Barrymore must have finished out the tour, as his name appeared in cast lists for presentations in San

⁹ Autobiographical Sketch, p. 130.

¹⁰ Barrymore, pp. 38-40.

Francisco,¹¹ Seattle,¹² Tacoma,¹³ and New York.¹⁴ On the whole, the company seems to have been a capable one, for frequent mention was made of its strength. The McKee Hankins were with the company in Denver¹⁵ and in San Francisco, but in the last-named city, Rankin left the company to become a theatre manager, and George Osbourne replaced him.¹⁶ Mrs. Rankin, whose two daughters, Gladys Rankin Drew and Phyllis Rankin¹⁷ were with the company, rejoined it later in the season and appeared in a production of The Jealous Wife. Other actors with the company during the season included Charles Ervin Verner, Charles Hanford, and Owen Fawcett.

¹¹ Minette A. Ker, "The History of the Theatre in California," Unpublished M. A. thesis, University of California, 1924, p. 119.

¹² Seattle Post-Intelligencer, October 2, 5, 6, 1893, clippings, also programs, Sayre-Carkeek Collection, Drama Library, University of Washington.

¹³ Tacoma News, October 2, 3, 7, 1893, clippings, Sayre-Carkeek Collection, Drama Library, University of Washington.

¹⁴ Odell, XV, 587.

¹⁵ William Campton Bell, "A History of the Denver Theatre during the Post-Pioneer Period (1881-1901)." Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1941, p. 280.

¹⁶ The Argonaut, September 25, 1893.

¹⁷ Phyllis Rankin secretly married Harry Gibbs, Drew's stage manager while the company was in Charleston. The fact became known in Columbus, Ga., and Drew dismissed the couple from the company. According to the Atlanta Journal, March 15, 16, 1894, Drew declared that marriage unsuitable, for he said that Gibbs was "illiterate and unfit socially as were his family." Miss Rankin later married Harry Davenport of the acting family.

One of the engagements which undoubtedly proved unprofitable, was the one in Seattle, for that city was said to have "enjoyed the unwelcome reputation of being the worst show town on the map" during the depression period.¹⁸

A Seattle newspaper, in announcing the appearance of Mrs. Drew, made the following comment on that actress' accomplishments:

. . . Mrs. John Drew has been ranked with the late Lester Wallack and Dion Boucicault in the direction of stage business and now that they are gone she is regarded without an equal on the English speaking stage.¹⁹

One does not know whether this was merely advance publicity for the company, or whether the newspaper writer expressed an opinion that was popular. The same article said that a friend of Mrs. Drew's had observed: "What Mrs. Drew doesn't know about comedy probably isn't worth mentioning."

Apparently the company was in financial distress when it reached the Midwest, and a story was circulated that Mrs. Drew had been forced to borrow money from John L. Sullivan, pugilist turned actor, to meet her obligations.²⁰

¹⁸ Bernard Berelson and H. F. Grant, "The Pioneer Theatre in Washington," Pacific Northwest Quarterly (April, 1937), XXVIII, 126.

¹⁹ Seattle Post-Intelligencer, October 2, 1893.

²⁰ The Daily Picayune, December 17, 1893.

The story was flatly denied by Mrs. Drew's business manager, but later Sidney Drew, who managed the company, admitted borrowing it.²¹

The company was in the New York area during the first month of the New Year and appeared at the 14th Street Theatre in The Rivals and The Road to Ruin, at the Harlem Opera House in The Road to Ruin, and at the Star Theatre in The Road to Ruin and The Jealous Wife.²² A review in the New York Times on January 23, commented:

There was very much assurance in advance that Mrs. John Drew would impart to the character of Mrs. Oakley the skill, finish, and character that permeated the chief comedy parts of what is fast becoming the old school of acting. She did more than that, for filling her company with the spirit of former years, they presented a series of pictures as familiar and lovable as if Gilbert, Wallack and Florence and Mrs. Conway were again treading the stage. . . .

They furnished a delightful evening, for those who had gathered to see and hear them were impelled by a longing for old comedy and not unlike that desire that at times comes for another taste of mother's cooking, baked in the original brick oven.

Odell, however, said that the cast did not compare to "the assignments of this play in the halcyon days of Wallack's Theatre," but said that Mrs. Drew played the role of the Widow Warren "delightfully and with pre-eminent authority" and that her dance was "something to remember."²³

²¹ Ibid., December 24, 1893.

²² The New York Times, January 1, 7, 18, 22, 1893.

²³ Odell, XV, 587.

In March, the company was in the Southeast and among the cities visited during this portion of the tour were Richmond, Charleston, Atlanta, Macon, Savannah, and Jacksonville. The Atlanta Journal, in announcing Mrs. Drew's appearance in Atlanta, said that a well-known manager had recently remarked:

"She [Mrs. Drew] stands in petticoats relatively in the same position as Joseph Jefferson in pants in old comedies. The late Lester Wallack and other celebrated actors and masters of dramatic art have recognized her as the queen of legitimate comedy. . . ."24

A reprint of an item from the Macon Telegraph in the Atlanta Journal said:

"For the first time in the memory of several old inhabitants Macon's theatregoers had the pleasure of witnessing real old-school comedy--the freshest most entrancing comedy imaginable. The fame of the Drews preceded them and when the curtain rose a crowded house was ready to greet the players and even more to enjoy the wit that was so constantly bubbling forth in The Rivals, Sheridan's brilliant drama. Of course, Mrs. Malaprop was easily first; her perfect make-up as the youthful old lady, and the utter unconscious ease with which she so calmly murdered the "Queen's English," were simply perfection. Every gesture, every facial movement was eloquent, and as for her malapropos remarks, they were funny beyond conception."25

The Atlanta Journal said that The Rivals "met every expectation," and made the following comments on Mrs. Drew's performance:

24 The Atlanta Journal, February 17, 1894.

25 Ibid., March 14, 1894. The Journal for March 13 carried reports of favorable receptions in Jacksonville and Savannah.

And again--there's but one Mrs. Malaprop. Time has dealt very gently with dear old Mrs. Drew. Her seventy--well, I won't say it so patly--odd years rest lightly on her shoulders. She is keenly alive to the requirements of the part, as delicate in its delineation, and as active in its presentation, as any woman of thirty could be. She "anylizes" you with laughter, throws you into "devulsions" and does it with all the grace of a young "gazette." Mrs. Malaprop is inseparable from Mrs. Drew. . . .

Mrs. Drew's costumes were elegant, and the entire production was a finished one throughout.²⁶

In May, the company returned again to Atlanta, to play for the women's department of the Cotton States and International Exposition. This time they presented The Jealous Wife. The Atlanta Journal called this production both an artistic and financial success.²⁷

In the past part of March, Mrs. Drew and the company opened in New Orleans at the Grand Opera House, appearing first in The Rivals. Two days after the play opened, the Daily Picayune commented:

Mrs. John Drew, the grand old comedienne, among the most noted of American actresses, should be pleased with the reception she is receiving at the Grand Opera House. A fine house greeted "The Rivals" last night, and she repeated her impersonation of Mrs. Malaprop, in which she had never had a superior.²⁸

"A large and fashionable audience" was said to have witnessed the presentation of The Road to Ruin. The same

²⁶ Ibid., March 15, 1894.

²⁷ Ibid., May 9, 1894.

²⁸ The Daily Picayune, March 27, 1894.

newspaper that made the preceding report also said:

Mrs. John Drew as Widow Warren duplicated the brilliant triumph she achieved as Mrs. Malaprop. Though of course the cruel, simpering, wily old widow was about as unlovable a character as could be imagined, Mrs. Drew made her absurd sentimentalities irresistibly funny. The simple command to her daughter, "Go to your room," never failed to elicit roars of laughter. True, many of her speeches were funny in themselves, but after all it was the absolute realism and consistency with which she invested the character that made it such a brilliant success. As an exposition of consummate legitimate dramatic art of the purest and most intellectual type, Mrs. John Drew's Widow Warren must take rank with the very best of the present generation. It is an impersonation which leaves nothing to be wished for. It is spirited, truthful, realistic, and yet womanly. While playing the giddy old widow Mrs. Drew never does anything that would make the most conservative play-goer feel that there was anything in the calling of the actress that was not perfectly consonant with womanly delicacy. All in all, the impersonation was one which could not fail to forcibly impress upon one's mind the fact that Mrs. Drew's retirement from the stage would mean not only a great deprivation to the play-going public, but a very serious loss to the dramatic profession, to which such acting as hers is calculated to give not only artistic, but social tone and standing.²⁹

The reviewer for the Daily Picayune also gave the presentation a favorable review, and commented upon her dancing of the hornpipe, which was as nimble as that of a girl. Said the reviewer: "Considering her years, Mrs. John Drew is a wonder, and a perfect artist."³⁰

During their New Orleans engagement, the company also was seen in The Jealous Wife, and according to a newspaper

²⁹ The Times-Democrat, March 28, 1894.

³⁰ The Daily Picayune, March 28, 1894.

report, the youngest member of the family, Sidney Rankin Drew appeared.³¹

Joseph Jefferson was playing an engagement at the St. Charles Theatre at the same time that Mrs. Drew was at the Grand Opera House, and each paid the other the compliment of attending the other's matinee.

Mrs. Drew was honored by a reception by the Woman's Club of New Orleans during her stay, which was glad, according to a newspaper report, "to pay tribute to a woman whom they had grown to love and admire for her true womanliness of character."³²

The Quarante Club gave a reception for Jefferson and Mrs. Drew was among those present, "looking twenty years younger than her actual age," She was said to be as "delightful, socially, as on the stage in her inimitable characters of Mrs. Malaprop and the Widow Warren." Jefferson, who frequently gave lectures on the drama, gave a short talk and Eugene Field "delighted his hearers with several recitations given in his own delightful and peculiar manner."³³

These receptions were of interest in themselves,

³¹ The Times-Democrat and the Daily Picayune, March 29, 1894. According to the Daily Picayune, March 27, young Drew, who was about two years old made an appearance. Any career this member of the family might have had was cut short by World War I. He was killed while serving with the Lafayette Esquadron in France.

³² The Daily Picayune, March 31, 1894.

³³ Ibid., April 1, 1894.

for they indicate a change in the social status of the members of the acting profession through the years. These two players, by gaining the admiration and respect of their patrons, helped to bring about this change.

The Drew Company was well received in Galveston, Jacksonville, Houston, and Dallas, Texas. Their appearance in Houston was a social event. The reviewer commented upon the large and fashionable audience with "a choice selection of belles and beaux [*sic*] of Houston's best society," and had praise for the production as a whole and Mrs. Drew in particular:

. . . The audience went to see Mrs. Drew, and they were satisfied. They found her the same inimitable Mrs. Malaprop with all her disjoined parts of speech, and possessing that same grace and naturalness that has characterized her acting for a score of years. She has lost none of her power of fascination, but on the contrary, her claim to popular favor is strengthened by her long endeavor to be worthy of the distinction she has long enjoyed as the original and only Mrs. Malaprop on the stage.³⁴

When The Road to Ruin was presented, a Houston newspaper reprinted an item about the production which originally appeared in the Washington Star after the company's appearance in the nation's capital earlier in the season:

Because of her artistic impersonation of the Widow Warren, rather than the importance of the part in the play, Mrs. John Drew is at the head of the cast, and although moulded on entirely different lines, the character may be ranked beside that of Mrs. Malaprop.

The widow, while very soft and sentimental by profession, is in reality quite practical in her campaigns for another husband. Mrs. Drew exaggerates neither quality; she is not ridiculously gushing, as the ordinary stage widow, but the consummate art with which she makes every point must be seen to be appreciated. Her dancing of the jig in the second act won her a double recall.³⁵

Mrs. Drew's appearance in Dallas occasioned the following review which was almost eulogistic in tone:

Mrs. John Drew has laid broad and deep the foundation of a true school of comic art. She will leave upon her final exit from the world's stage the bright light and rich heritage of a life nobly devoted to the "art of arts." The achievements of such distinguished artists can not fail to leave their impress on the contemporary stage.

As the gulf stream, bearing in its bosom the genial warmth of the sunny south and tempering in its course the chilling winds of the north, renders soft and balmy the climate of distant shores, so the lives of such worthy artists extend beyond the narrow limits of their own age and bless the whole world of art with their hallowed influence and character. In this age of dross superficiality, tinsel and glitter in dramatic art the acting of such a star as Mrs. Drew comes to the theatre-geer with pride.

Such art for the time makes one forgetful of "the whips and scorns of time," lessens the toil and contributes to the pleasure of each day's duties, enlivens the imagination, touches the heart and awakens the slumbering spark of divinity from the clod. This thought on the moral tone of the theatre is prompted by the splendid exhibition of stage art that was given at the opera-house last evening by Mrs. John Drew and her talented company. It would indeed seem difficult--considering the artistically vital and beautiful performance of last evening--for Mrs. Drew to have made a happier selection of a comedy than of "The Rivals" for the exhibition, not only of her own immediate talent, but of the strength and capability of her supporting company. . . .³⁶

³⁵ Ibid., April 6, 1894.

³⁶ The Dallas Morning News, April 14, 1894.

Even though monetary rewards were not great for this tour, Mrs. Drew must have received a good deal of satisfaction from the reception given, which seems to have been that accorded a distinguished member of the theatrical profession. In a day when stars were often criticized for gathering about them an inferior company, Mrs. Drew was often praised for the capability of the actors in the company in which she starred. Then, too, since the production as a whole frequently received commendation, Mrs. Drew must have continued to insist that the plays with which she was associated were well put upon the stage.

Ethel Barrymore has been reported as having made her debut as Julia in The Rivals, January 25, 1894, at the Empire Theatre in New York,³⁷ and has also been reported as having made her first appearance in 1896 in her uncle, John Drew's company.³⁸ Mrs. John Drew's Company appeared in New York at the Star Theatre in January 1894. Lionel Barrymore's name appeared in cast lists, but Ethel's did not, so apparently she was not with her grandmother. Also, the version of Sheridan's play performed by Mrs. Drew was the Jefferson version, and the role of Julia was excised. If Ethel ever

³⁷ John Parker and John D. D. Parker, eds. The Dramatic List and Who's Who in the Theatre (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Ltd., 1952), p. 312. Who's Who in America XXVII (1952-53), p. 140.

³⁸ Odell, IV, 587-88.

did appear with her grandmother, it was probably in the role of Lucy.

This was apparently Mrs. Drew's last tour of any considerable length although she did make another briefer tour in 1896 in an "all-star" revival of The Rivals. This "all-star" revival seems to have had its beginning in 1895 in a benefit which Jefferson arranged for the veteran actor, Charles W. Couldock. The cast for this performance included Jefferson, Mrs. Drew, Nat C. Goodwin, William H. Crane, Henry Miller, DeWolf Hopper, Thomas Q. Seabrooke, Thomas W. Keene, Viola Allen and Nellie McHenry.³⁹ A second performance of the play with the same cast was given later in Boston,⁴⁰ and Hopper related the following incident in connection with the engagement which shows Jefferson's appreciation of Mrs. Drew's comedy acting:

At the same performance I was crossing the stage behind the scenes when I saw Jefferson looking through a crack in the center doors of the set, sizing up the audience, I assumed.

"That's a sight worth seeing," I commented.

"I was not thinking of the audience," he replied. "Stay a moment and watch this laughing exit of Mrs. Drew's." I stood behind him, peering over his head as Mrs. Malaprop closed her scene. When she had finished, he took my arm to walk around to make our joint entrance.

³⁹ The Daily Picayune, May 12, 1895. The benefit took place May 31.

⁴⁰ E. Tompkins and Q. Kilby, The History of the Boston Theatre, 1854-1901 (Boston and New York: 1916), p. 427.

"I have had the honor of playing with that lady hundreds of times, and I never have failed to watch that scene," he said.⁴¹

An "all-star cast" was assembled to go on tour the following season. The second "all-star cast" was made up of Jefferson, Mrs. Drew, Goodwin, Robert Taber, Joseph Holland, E. M. Holland, Wilson, Julia Marlowe, and Fanny Rice. Goodwin later gave this account of the tour:

We visited all the principal cities, never playing over two nights in one place. Business was enormous, the management clearing many thousands of dollars during the four weeks' tour. We were the recipients of many attentions, our time being spent driving, dining, and visiting various public institutions and colleges. We held impromptu receptions nightly behind the scenes. A large table was always spread on the stage laden with viands and many distinguished people partook of our hospitalities. Our happiest times were spent in the private car where we would congregate after the play and spend a few hours in anecdote and song.⁴²

The same actor commented upon Mrs. Drew's acting performances and also mentioned the fact that she received a very small salary for her efforts:

(What a performance Mrs. Drew gave! She put the play in her gown every night and took it home with her and the management told me that her salary for the tour was less than that paid Francis Wilson! My weekly stipend was far in excess of hers and every night after viewing her performance I was really ashamed to take the money.)

⁴¹ DeWolf Hopper with W. W. Stout, Reminiscences of DeWolf Hopper, Once a Clown Always a Clown (Garden City: Publishing Co., c. 1927), pp. 123, 124.

⁴² Nat C. Goodwin, Nat Goodwin's Book (Boston: Richard G. Badger, The Gorham Press, c. 1914), p. 182.

During this artistic trip (five dollars a seat makes anything artistic) I watched Mrs. Jefferson day and night. After those performances I would walk to the private car, go over "The Rivals" as I had seen it performed and wonder if any of us, with the exception of Mrs. John Drew were anything like the characters of Sheridan's brain.⁴³

The record of Mrs. Drew's roles after this revival is not complete. Hopper, who played David in the first "all-star cast" said that he valued two bits of praise more than any others he had ever received. They were Jefferson's praise for his portrayal of David, and Mrs. Drew's praise for his portrayal of Falstaff which he played to her Dame Quickly at an al fresco performance of The Merry Wives of Windsor at the Grand Union Hotel at Saratoga. Hopper does not date this performance, but it must have taken place after the tour of the Drew Comedy Company. Hopper took over the part of Falstaff from William H. Crane, who had played it the previous season, but who was too ill to play it on this occasion. Crane let Hopper use his pads and wigs and tutored him in the role. Hopper repeated the following discussion he had with Crane in regard to the demands of the role:

"You have an impossible thing to do," Crane told me. "Mistress Ford and Mistress Page have deliberately had you dumped into the Thames. Dame Quickly comes to lure you back, and within her speech of eight lines you must evidence, plausibly, a change from bitter determination never to see Page and Ford again to an eager willingness.

⁴³ Ibid., 45, 46.

Dame Quickly can help you tremendously in making this incredible mental switch seem convincing. By the way, who is she?"

"Oh, just some amateur Saratoga Chip," I replied breezily.

"Then God help you," he groaned.

"On the contrary, Dame Quickly is none other than Mrs. John Drew herself," I reassured Crane.

"My boy, you won't have to do a thing but stand there," he exclaimed. "Let her do it."

It was true. Speaking those eight lines slowly, Mrs. Drew with her changing facial expression and consummate art, drew out of me my sulks into a comical eagerness, without doing anything beyond following the cues her face gave me.⁴⁴

This was Mrs. Drew's first appearance in the Shakespearean character who was also something of a Mrs. Malaprop, as far as speech was concerned. Rose Coghlan played Mistress Ford.

On June 2, 1896, Mrs. Drew appeared at a testimonial benefit given for George Holland at the Girard Avenue Theatre, Philadelphia. Mrs. Drew appeared in the "Quarrel Scene" with Holland and the "Screen Scene" with John Malone, John F. McArdle and William Parker. The following year Malone recalled these scenes from The School for Scandal.

A little more than a year ago it was my great privilege to play Joseph Surface to Mrs. Drew's Lady Teazle, and a recollection of the exquisite grace and delicacy with which this great artist conveyed to her associates and the public the meaning of her scene is an unfailing delight.

⁴⁴ Hopper, pp. 124-126.

She owned and used the great power of the truly great actor, that of silently leading those about her to act responsively. She had a way all her own of checking Joseph's advances toward familiarity in the famous screen scene. It was only a slight glance at his advanced hand, and a slight, a very slight, but very positive withdrawal of form, but it told the lady's innate and unchangeable modesty. An actress less skilled would have done more and pleased less.⁴⁵

Mrs. Drew never actually retired from the stage, and those people who saw her in The Sporting Duchess in January, 1897,⁴⁶ did not realize that they were seeing her for the last time. She seems to have been unwell during the spring and summer and remained at a boarding house at Larchmont when various members of the family went off to pursue their respective careers at the beginning of a new season. Because of her habit of minimizing any personal illness, her immediate relatives did not realize that she would not make the tour which she talked of making later in the season. When Mrs. Drew made her final exit, August 31, 1897,⁴⁷ only her fifteen-year old grandson, John Barrymore, who was living with her, was present to administer to her needs.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Girard Avenue Theatre Program, June 2, 1896, Pennsylvania Historical Society Collection of Programs and Playbills, and Malone, p. 910.

⁴⁶ Moses, p. 182.

⁴⁷ Mrs. Drew's funeral at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church was attended by many notable people in the theatrical profession. She was buried in Glenwood Cemetery, Philadelphia, but in 1913 was moved to Mount Vernon Cemetery in the same city.

⁴⁸ Lionel Barrymore, John Barrymore, and Gene Fowler all describe Mrs. Drew's last days.

When Mrs. Drew died, newspapers throughout the country mentioned her long and successful career in the theatre. As might be expected, the newspapers in Philadelphia carried the most complete stories of her life's work, and writers were unstinting in their praise of her contributions to the cultural life of their city.⁴⁹ Mrs. Drew was praised for her versatility as an actress, for her efforts in elevating stage art during her long career as a manager, and for her generosity to less fortunate members of the theatrical profession.

One Philadelphia newspaper printed a tribute from her long-time friend and associate, Joseph Jefferson:

Special to the Public Ledger.⁷ Buzzard's Bay, August 31. "I have known Mrs. Drew," said Mrs. Jefferson tonight, when he was informed of her death, "from boyhood. Only two years ago she told me that my first appearance as a child but three years of age was a vivid picture in her memory."

"During my whole professional career we have been from time to time dramatically associated, and in my sorrow at the news of her death, it is consolation for me to know that we have, during our lifelong acquaintance, ever been the best of friends. She was a great actress, a dutiful wife, a kind and thoughtful daughter, and a loving mother."⁵⁰

Another Philadelphia newspaper marked Mrs. Drew's

⁴⁹ See The Evening Telegraph, August 31, 1897, The Times-Philadelphia, The Public Ledger, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The North American, The New York Times, and The New York Herald-Tribune, September 1-6, 1897.

⁵⁰ The Public Ledger, September 1, 1897.

passing with an editorial:

Mrs. John Drew

With the Death of Mrs. John Drew the American stage has lost an actress-manager who in the highest degree represented an example for the emulation and incentive for its ambition. Among all men and women whose names stand in the dramatic annals of this country as contributing to the advancement of that profession in any capacity, Mrs. Drew maintained a conspicuous prominence. Alike as actress or manager her life was marked by a devotion and earnestness to her chosen work that could have no other result than the honorable record she leaves behind.

If it be remembered that the playhouse now bears no comparison to that of fifty or sixty years since; if the wildest dramatic speculation of that day never dreamt of the general talent, the spread of interest, the magnificence of stage production and of modern theatrical comforts, to Mrs. Drew must come a considerable share of credit for the change. From the earliest date of her management, she put into practice the valuable ideas gleaned from her life-long experience of the old system, and whether it was in her own grand work, the excellence of the companies she organized, the interest and novelty of the plays she presented, or the capable manner of their interpretation in the theatre under her control, she exercised a power in the general development of the drama that was more than influential. A reference to the record of Mrs. Drew's incumbency of the Arch Street Theatre for over thirty years will show that every step taken by her as actress or manager counted for dramatic progress.

Consequently, in any summing up of those who are entitled to the fullest meed of praise for the work they have done in making the stage what it is today, Mrs. Drew is among the first. And it is not probable that her supremacy can be endangered. For, whatever laurels managerial enterprise or dramatic talent and industry may win hereafter, they must gain an added glory when doffed in respect and admiration of Mrs. Drew.⁵¹

⁵¹ The Times-Philadelphia, September 1, 1897.

Since Mrs. Drew never formally retired from the acting profession before her death, there has been no point in this study where general comments upon her acting might be introduced. Since her acting career covered almost her entire life, it seems that an evaluation should come at the end. The actress herself remarked that she expected to find joy in acting for the whole of her life and when the day came when it would no longer be possible for her to do so, her joy in life would also be lost.⁵²

Late in her career, a reporter asked Mrs. Drew if she followed any particular school of acting in her early days in the theatre, and she replied:

"We did not have schools of acting in those days. An actress had to possess wonderful versatility and adaptability and had to be able to play in any range of character from tragedy to comedy. I used to play in and sing in opera, too. An opera singer in those days did not mean exactly what it does to-day. The old operas were like comedies with songs and dialogues interspersed. Under my mother's eye I had splendid opportunities for dramatic work. I do not suppose the actresses of today, who master only a certain part have any idea of the work required of the actress of the old days."

The reporter asked Mrs. Drew whether she thought there was any school of acting at that time [1894], and she said:

"No, I do not; there is no school of acting, though some pretend there is. The school for actors has not turned out a fine actor yet. One must not only love

⁵² Barrymore, p. 16.

acting and the stage to be an actor; acting is a matter of feeling, and experience. One must be in reality the character personated; self-consciousness must not appear; one's identity must be lost in that of the part assumed, and acting as a fine art comes only with patient up-hill work, observation and study in that best of all schools, the theatre itself. One must be content to commence at the lowest rounds and work one's way to the highest point of the ladder. Talk about schools of acting, a girl can no more tell how she will feel before an immense audience, or how she will acquit herself when she has merely recited to a school assemblage than a traveler is supposed to know how to ascend Mount Blanc merely from the geographic description. I have no patience with schools of acting."

During the same interview, the reporter asked Mrs. Drew a question which has been of interest since the days actresses first appeared upon the stage. It was: "Well, what do you think of the stage as a profession for young ladies--its morals, temptations and dangers?" To this, Mrs. Drew, who had not only spent her own life upon the stage, but had introduced a daughter and a niece to the profession, replied:

"I think it is as good a profession as any, if the girl has the right capacity to make a good actress. If she has not, she had better not venture upon it. As for morals, I think the morals on the stage are as good as the morals off the stage, though one would not think so if one has to believe all the queer stories told of actresses in novels. I am happy to say that they are, as a rule, not so, however. And as to temptations and dangers in the theatrical profession for young girls, a woman is no more exposed in this profession than in any other employment in which she is brought into contact with men. The woman who is pure and honorable at heart, and exemplifies that in her character, will be just as pure and honorable on the stage as off it and shielded in her father's household; and as far as respect from men, a woman who demands it will always receive it."⁵³

⁵³ The Daily Picayune, March 27, 1894.

And thus we have Mrs. Drew's statements concerning acting as an art and as a profession. Not only are these words excellent advice to a young player, they are also a summation of her own philosophy.

One of the first historians to comment upon Mrs. Drew's acting career, was Charles Durang, actor and historian, who made mention of her acting ability and her character.

After Miss Lane's first appearance at the Walnut street house, she soon commenced her successful career throughout the country. Her reputation is therefore essentially American. As Mrs. C. W. Hunt⁵⁴ she was a sparkling member of the Walnut Street Theatre, under Wemyss's management, and of the Park Theatre in New York, in 1843. And as Mrs. Mossop, and as Mrs. John Drew, she has led the business with eclat in every principal theatre on the continent. Thus as a stock actress, or an attractive star, deemed peerless in every variety of role, she combines the most indomitable professional industry with womanly worth, that has won for the subject of our memoir laurels perennial.

Durang, whose history covers the years 1749-1855, and was published between 1858 and 1860, was well acquainted with her career before she became an actress-manager. He attempted to answer the question which doubtless has been asked many times about Mrs. Drew's career "Why does so much excellence rest in the position of a stock actress?"

We know not--probably a predilection for the rational comforts of domestic life and advancing maternal cares cause this choice. These social duties and pleasures may have led her to remain in tranquil and unblazoned

⁵⁴ As has been noted previously, Durang seemed to be under the impression that Mrs. Drew had been Mrs. C. W. Hunt instead of Mrs. H. B. Hunt.

position of the stationary actress, rather than to soar on the ostentatious pinions of the star, with its ephemeral notoriety and uncertain pecuniary benefits. In Mrs. Drew's case we see a divided unity of professional labors and fame; while her talented husband Mr. John Drew, has circumnavigated the physical and theatrical globes, and as we are informed, with pleasure and profit, Mrs. Drew pursues with honor and success the even tenor of her professional life as Philadelphia's favorite actress, affording to intellectual amusements a pabulum from "gay to grave," from the pensive to the dazzling. We behold in her artistic pencilings, the conception and illustration of character moving in unity--every line of nature--combining simplicity with art, the latter skillfully veiled by the naturalness of the former. When we urge nature as a leading monitor in the composition of acting we mean it to be subjective to moral and cultivated influences, to the tuition and guidance of the liberal arts.⁵⁵

When Mrs. Drew became manager of the Arch Street Theatre in 1861, there was even less reason for her to aspire to the life of a star. Doubtless she found her time fully occupied in the affairs of the theatre, particularly since she acted as the leading lady during much of the time that she maintained a stock company. Then, too, she doubtless enjoyed the security which her success as a manager brought her for many years, for the position not only provided a livelihood for herself, but for her mother, her three children, and the two children that were known as her adopted children. Then, too, she must have received rewards other than those of a pecuniary nature. There must have been a good deal of personal satisfaction in the knowledge that she

⁵⁵ Durang, III, p. 72.

was the manager of one of the leading theatres in the country, even in the fact that she was one of the few successful woman managers in the history of the profession. In later years, there was the knowledge, also, that she had managed the fortunes of a leading theatre longer than any other woman manager, and longer than many men. She must also have been happy in the knowledge, particularly during the stock period, that she was able to bring to the people of Philadelphia a variety of programs which were well set upon the stage. The fact that her stock company enjoyed an enviable reputation for many years, and that they were not only able to support visiting stars in such a manner as to make for a well-rounded production, but were able to attract interest to the pieces presented by the company, must also have been a source of satisfaction. Probably more than any manager in this country, Mrs. Drew sought to keep old comedy alive, perhaps because she excelled in many characters in the old plays, although she seems to have had an interest in bringing them before the public for their own sake. It must also have given her a feeling of well being to know that she was in a position to help less fortunate members of her profession. Mrs. Drew also enjoyed a measure of personal prestige in her profession and a position of some importance in the city in which she spent most of her life.

Durang was one of the earliest, if not the earliest historian to comment upon Mrs. Drew's versatility as a player,

a characteristic which also distinguishes her as an unusual member of the profession:

Mrs. Drew's range of characters is almost illimitable. If she fails to reach the Siddonian elevation of tragedy, we must remember that very few tragediennes within the last fifty years have grasped it. In Mrs. Drew the conception and expression through the mobility of the features are ever given with an agreeable force; and although her elocution in tragedy may often lack variety of tone, yet is she ever accurate. Her cadences are musical, her gestures intensely expressive. From sternness she relapses into placidity and cheerfulness with the placidity, ease and grace of nature. To enumerate her various excellencies would only be a labor of superogation, as her multitudinous admirers in our city know and appreciate to the very echo, that should applaud again. All must know how oft her Shaksperian portraits thrilled us with pity, terror and horror. How often have our sensibilities been touched with melancholy pleasure at her simple pathos in domestic tragic scenes, calling forth the sympathetic tear, which declares the stage's power to impart moral instruction in its recreations! "But, last though not least in our dear love," do we not behold joyous Comedy gracefully tripping before us, reforming our foibles, our social vices, by a laugh? With what intellectual delight have we ever beheld the polished and high toned Lady Townley /sic, the vivacious Widow Cheerly, reveling in charitable deeds; the romantic witty Rosalind, the very creature of poetical, virtuous thought and action, with many others in sweet comedy's train, all moving before us with a finish and feeling as the work of a refined artiste, and that sympathetic actress of nature and art embodied in Mrs. John Drew.

"Her eye, her action dart, with lively force,
Sense from her mind, and passion from its source."⁵⁶

T. Allston Brown, a theatre critic and historian, who was acquainted with Mrs. Drew's work for more than forty years, described Mrs. Drew's ability as an actress in some detail. He too commented upon her versatility:

⁵⁶ Durang, III, 72.

Mrs. Drew is one of the most versatile actresses ever seen on the American stage. I know of no lady who possesses greater originality of conception, more boldness of design, more intimate knowledge of that difficult art which assimilates acting to the workings of natural impulse. She is perfectly "at home" in tragedy and comedy. As a child and an actress she has been connected with the stage for nearly three-score years. While there is not now one before the public who can equal her in years.

Mrs. Drew is one of the few instances of a prodigy in youth becoming a star in the dramatic constellation. Her greatness does not rise from that of character, but consists in her manner of portraying it. In form, stature, mobility of countenance, and physique, she is made to give the dramatic world assurance of an actress; while a lofty intellect, passionate devotion to her art, and a highly cultivated mind, have stamped the seal of excellence upon her brow.

Her reading is faultless; her voice clear, of great compass, and musical in tone; her enunciation so clear and distinct that you lose no word or syllable of the text in her most impassioned utterance. She does not "mouth" or "saw the air," as some of our players do, nor "tear a passion to tatters;" nor does she "o'er-step the modesty of nature."

There is a refreshing originality about her conceptions, while to a remarkable degree she possesses the talent that makes a bodiless creation of the dramatist's mind a living fact, suffused and impregnated with natural emotions and desires. It is in the higher range of dramatic acting that this lady shines. She invests her character with a charm that had its birth in nature. She disdains the idea of playing to an audience, and appealing to its sympathies through the garb only of the character in which she appears. In energy, in earnestness of purpose, in fidelity to all those minute details of delineation which make it perfect, she is the queen of her art. She has always possessed a wonderfully quick study; and I am told by old actors, who have been members of her stock company at the "Arch," that she was never known to come to even the first rehearsal with the book of the play. Whenever a new piece was produced, it was first read to the company, then the rehearsals called. She was always letter perfect.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Brown, "Mrs. John Drew," pp. 131-133.

The two historians just cited were perhaps better acquainted with Mrs. Drew's work in the theatre for longer periods of time than any other writers. Other critics and historians, including Ireland, Odell, and Winter, made their critical judgments on the basis of having seen her in a few roles, in the last two instances, roles which she performed late in life. Moses, who probably also saw the actress in her late years, drew upon Brown and Clara Morris' articles for much of his information in his biographical sketch of Mrs. Drew. Walter Pritchard Eaton, in the Dictionary of American Biography, drew upon Moses, Mrs. Drew's obituary notice in the New York Times, September 1, 1897, and several works on Joseph Jefferson, as well as Mrs. Drew's Autobiographical Sketch and John Drew's biography.⁵⁸ Two recent theatre histories have commented upon Mrs. Drew's work in the theatre. Freedley and Reeves dismiss it in a very few sentences:

The Drew-Barrymore family in this country was founded by John and Louisa Lane Drew. However, it was Mrs. Drew (1820-1897), with her indomitable management of the Arch Street Theatre in Philadelphia, who was truly responsible for the establishment of their fortunes in America. Mrs. Malaprop, in *The Rivals* (she played in two famous revivals), was her best part. She was not a subtle actress but she had authority and genuine humor.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Dictionary of American Biography, V, pp. 454, 455.

⁵⁹ George Freedley and John A. Reeves, A History of the Theatre (New York: Crown Publishers, 1941), p. 330.

Hughes, after mentioning her early career, said: "Throughout her long life she was the most brilliant and versatile actress in the American theatre, and from 1861 until shortly before her death was manager of the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia."⁶⁰ Hughes also mentioned her descendants, the well known Barrymore family of today. Freedley and Reeves do not give her credit for the personal success which she attained. Hughes' statement as to her being "the most brilliant and versatile actress in the American theatre" might seem somewhat exaggerated, although critics in her own day would seem to agree. Regrettably Hughes does not comment upon her success as a manager other than to say that it was long. Both writers, understandably, identify Mrs. Drew with her descendants, which is, unfortunately the only identity she has to many people.

Coad and Mims have considered Mrs. Drew's career at greater length than either of the later historians. In describing it, they stated that she was "the most famous actress-manager of the United States." They commented upon her appearances with the great actors of the day and her versatility as a player. In regard to her management, they called attention to her stock company made up of many members who later became famous, but they erred in stating that she

⁶⁰ Glenn Hughes, The Story of the Theatre, A Short History of Theatrical Art from Its Beginning to the Present Day (New York: Samuel French and Co., 1947), p. 332.

gave up the stock company in 1869. Coad and Mims described her theatre as one of the most important and artistic theatres in America, and noted that the decline in its prosperity came with the rise of the combination system. These historians said also that Lester Wallack and Charlotte Cushman appeared at Mrs. Drew's theatre, but there seems to be no evidence to support this statement.⁶¹

Several reasons may account for the fact that Mrs. John Drew's efforts in the theatre are not as well known today as they deserve to be. The passage of time of course, tends to obscure the ephemeral reputation of a performer. The eminence of her descendants has also tended to put her in the background. First of all, she confined her efforts during the largest part of her career to one city, Philadelphia, which although an important theatrical center, was not the leading one. Secondly, she chose to have a family and maintain a home at a time when she might very well have pursued a career as a star. She preferred a regular position with a good stock company to the uncertain life of a star who depended upon a series of engagements in order to make a livelihood. Perhaps, too, after a childhood of travel, a permanent home and security were more attractive than an

⁶¹ Oral Sumner Coad and Edwin Mims, Jr., "The American Stage," The Pageant of America, A Pictorial History of the United States ed. by Ralph H. Gabriel (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1929), XIV, 97, 198, 220.

itinerant existence. Thirdly, she became a theatre manager, and directed her efforts toward making her theatre a first-class playhouse. During this time, however, she did add to her lustre as a player in the city in which she chose to work, and in later years, she toured and became known for her work as a comedienne and was widely acclaimed for her portrayal of the role of Mrs. Malaprop. Fourthly, despite her versatility as a performer, Mrs. Drew was essentially a comedienne, and as such, she has shared the fate of many players of comedy throughout the ages, that of not being taken seriously. The reputations of the players of tragedy seem to be more enduring than the actors of comedy. Lastly, Mrs. Drew was a woman and the professional careers of women in the theatre have not been studied in as great detail by scholars and theatre historians as have those of the men.

An examination of Mrs. John Drew's life work in the nineteenth century proves conclusively that the actress-manager had a prominent place in the history of the American theatre for that period, and is deserving of greater credit than being mentioned as the progenitor of a well-known family of players of the present day.

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V I T A

Dorothy Eldeen Stolp was born in Sprague, Washington and received her grade and high school education there. Her undergraduate work was done at the University of Washington and Eastern Washington College of Education. She received the Bachelor of Arts in Education degree from the last-named school, August, 1940. Her work for the Master of Arts degree was completed at Northwestern University, June, 1948. She is now a candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at Louisiana State University, August, 1952.

EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Dorothy E. Stolp

Major Field: Speech

Title of Thesis: Mrs. John Drew, American Actress-Manager, 1820-1897

Approved:

C. L. Shawer
Major Professor and Chairman

Joseph H. Hix
Acting Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Edith Dabney

Fries Webster Gray

Harriett Idol

W. J. Olive

Oliver

J. E. Wheeler

Date of Examination:

July 29, 1952